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CASTING OF HALIDE AND FLUORIDE ALLOYS
FOR LASER WINDOWS

R. T. Newberg, et al

Raytheon Company

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| 20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) During the first six months of this program several important goals have been accomplished. The problem of residual strain in castings of alkali halides (KCl and SrCl₂ doped KCl) and alkaline earth fluorides (CaF₂) has been overcome by the development of proper annealing and slow cooling procedures. Semi-quantitative analysis of absorption coefficients and scattering center (produced mainly during improper annealing procedures in the case of the fluorides) has shown a correlation between the two in preliminary results for both the halides and fluorides. | | |

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Abstract (Cont'd)

Large castings ($5\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter) of CaF_2 and small castings (3 in. diameter) of SrF_2 have been produced with low optical absorption coefficients at $5.25\text{ }\mu\text{m}$. High quality CaF_2 castings have been obtained by using as starting material either high purity single crystal chips or "reagent" grade powder that has been subjected to reactive atmosphere processing (RAP) in teflon vapors.

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TECHNICAL PROGRAM SUMMARY

The primary objectives of this program are to complete the investigation of the properties of fusion cast $\text{SrCl}_2\text{-KCl}$ alloys and to investigate the fabrication and properties of alkaline earth fluoride castings for high-power laser window applications.

During the first six months, time-temperature-transformation curves for precipitation and attendant hardness reduction in $\text{SrCl}_2\text{-KCl}$ alloys have been completed. The results indicate that for less than about 800 ppm SrCl_2 in solid solution, it should be possible to cool alloys from the melting point to room temperature without precipitation.

Thermal conductivity measurements taken at 93.5°C determined that there is little effect of SrCl_2 (up to two percent added to the melt) on the conductivity of KCl . Attempts were made to determine the conductivity near room temperature but were unsuccessful due to the large scatter in the data.

A serious problem with casting these materials which have large volume changes upon freezing and large thermal expansion coefficients is the residual stress in the ingots after cooling. During this reporting period an annealing and cooling procedure was successfully developed which removes the major part of the residual stress in KCl castings.

Reactive atmosphere processing (RAP) of "reagent" grade KCl starting material was successful in removing impurities which produced strong absorption bands in the IR. However, the broad absorption centered at about $10\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ which produces strong $10.6\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ absorption was not eliminated completely.

It was observed that many samples which do not exhibit the broad $10\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ micrometer absorption band still may have a high $10.6\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ absorption coefficient. Preliminary data indicate that this high apparent absorption coefficient can be correlated with scattering center density in the bulk material.

As expected, the alkaline earth fluorides are considerably easier to cast than the alkali halides because of their more favorable mechanical and

thermal properties and smaller volume contraction on solidifying. Castings up to six inches in diameter by about one-half inch thick have been successfully fabricated. Chemical analysis indicates that the purity of the castings is equivalent to that of the starting materials.

Preliminary hot forgings of single crystal CaF_2 have been performed at temperatures near 1000°C which are sufficiently high to provide ease in forging but an attendant undesirable large grain size.

Calorimetric absorption coefficients at $5.3\ \mu\text{m}$ on cast SrF_2 have been obtained as low as $1.2 \times 10^{-4}\ \text{cm}^{-1}$. Calorimetric absorption coefficients at $5.3\ \mu\text{m}$ on cast CaF_2 have been obtained in the mid $10^{-4}\ \text{cm}^{-1}$ range. Qualitative correlation between scattering center density and apparent absorption coefficients has been observed in the fluorides as was the case with the halides.

In-house purification of "reagent" grade powder starting material has achieved as high-quality castings of CaF_2 as high-purity single crystal starting material.

Annealing at 1000°C and slow cooling successfully removes residual stress in cast CaF_2 ingots. However, the annealing is accompanied by almost a factor of two increase in the apparent $5.3\ \mu\text{m}$ absorption coefficient and a significant increase in scatter center density. These scattering centers are almost certainly caused by a change in the intrinsic or impurity chemistry of the fluoride with subsequent precipitation upon cooling. The problem can be overcome by annealing at a lower temperature (900°C) or by annealing at 1000°C under a better vacuum or under a partial pressure of teflon vapor providing a purifying "fluorine" atmosphere.

PREFACE

This report was prepared by Raytheon Company, Research Division, Waltham, Massachusetts under Contract No. F19628-74-C-0148 entitled "Casting of Halide and Fluoride Alloys for Laser Windows." This work is supported by the Advanced Research Projects Agency and is monitored by the Air Force Cambridge Research Laboratories, Bedford, Mass.

At Raytheon Company the investigation is being carried out in the Advanced Materials Department of the Research Division under the direction of Dr. J. Pappis, principal investigator, and Dr. R. T. Newberg. Assisting with the material fabrication and processing are T. Wong and A. De. Dr. T. Kohane and T. Varitimos are performing optical absorption measurements. Dr. O. Guentert provided the ion probe analysis and SEM micrographs. Dr. P. Miles is consultant to the program.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The continued progress in the design and realization of laser and optical systems, particularly that of high-power infrared lasers operating in the 2 to 6 μm and 10.6 μm wavelength regions, has created the need for improved window and lens materials suitable for use in large, high-resolution optical systems. Specifically, these materials must be strong, scatter-free, and have low absorption to satisfy optical element requirements in sizes that would often be difficult to fabricate from a common optical material such as glass. Thus, to make large, strong, high-quality optical elements from the better infrared transmitting materials such as the alkali halides and alkaline earth fluorides is indeed a formidable task.

Until recently, only pure, single-crystal and hot-pressed polycrystalline optical elements of these materials have been available. Neither the process of single-crystal growth nor that of hot pressing can be easily scaled to larger sizes. Furthermore, pure single crystals are not strong enough and hot pressed material does not have low enough scatter and absorption to allow the fabrication of large, high-quality infrared optical elements.

We have been actively engaged in a program whose primary goal has been to evaluate fusion casting as a fabrication technique for polycrystalline infrared window materials. Fusion casting is an attractive process in that it offers the possibility of obtaining dense, scatter-free material and can be easily scaled to larger sizes.

The effort on this program was directed to the alkali halides with the objectives of investigating the effects of grain size and alloying on the mechanical and optical properties of cast material. Emphasis was placed on obtaining high yield strengths and low 10.6 μm absorption with $\text{SrCl}_2\text{-KCl}$ alloys as a function of alloy content, grain size and heat treatment. The major achievements were the fabrication of eight-inch diameter, directionally-solidified castings and the growth of single crystals with yield strengths typically around 2000-4000 psi, with some as high as 9000 psi in certain alloys; and optical absorption coefficients in the mid 10^{-4} cm^{-1} range for these same alloys. These results have been extremely encouraging, yet a major problem with high residual stress in cast halides still remains.

In the present program, we will address ourselves to the residual stress problem. The characterization of $\text{SrCl}_2\text{-KCl}$ alloys will also be completed, thus allowing us to completely demonstrate the feasibility of strengthening and casting alkali halides while maintaining their low $10.6\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ optical absorption.

The bulk of the program is directed to casting alkaline earth fluoride alloys for optical elements in the $2\text{ to }6\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ region. Many of the properties of the alkaline earth fluorides such as thermal conductivity, strength, thermal expansion coefficients, etc., make them far superior to the alkali halides for fabrication by casting. The experience we have had with these materials indicates that this is indeed the case. We are specifically investigating the feasibility of fusion casting alkaline earth fluorides by measuring the optical and mechanical properties of the cast material. The effects of alloy additions and heat treatment on mechanical and optical properties are also being investigated and an optimum composition and fabrication process will be developed.

2.0 ALKALI HALIDES

2.1 Initial Program Objectives

The program previously funded under AFCRL Contract No. F19628-72-C-0307 was originally proposed to develop stronger forms of both the alkali halides and the alkaline earth fluorides and to investigate the feasibility of their fabrication by fusion casting. Because of the intense interest in the alkali halides for 10.6 μm window applications, the entire effort was devoted to the halides. All of the results of that program are presented in detail elsewhere¹⁻³ and will not be repeated here. In the present program, a few extensions of this work are being made in order to complete the earlier results and to solve some of the major remaining problems with the halides.

2.2 Residual Stress

The most severe remaining problem with the cast halide alloys is that of the high residual stresses found in the ingots as shown in Fig. 2-1. These stresses are high enough to cause cracking in some cases, and have led to the development of cracking during subsequent cutting and polishing in others. These stresses are doubtlessly introduced during the cooling cycle due to temperature gradients within the ingot while some regions are more plastic than others. These temperature gradients can be decreased by decreasing the overall cooling rate. To estimate how low a cooling rate might be necessary for KCl, consider two regions in the ingot separated by a distance d , in a constant temperature gradient $\Delta T/d$. If no plastic deformation takes place, then the stress in each (one in compression and the other in tension) is approximately:

$$\sigma = \frac{\alpha E \Delta T}{2} \quad (2.1)$$

where α is the thermal expansion coefficient and E is Young's modulus. The heat flux out of the ingot, \dot{q} , is

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Fig. 2-1 Strain Pattern of Casting NPC-15 (200 ppm nominal SrCl_2) as Viewed Through Crossed Polarizers. Three inch diameter sample.

$$\dot{q} = kA \frac{\Delta T}{d} \quad (2.2)$$

where k is the thermal conductivity and A is the area through which the heat is being conducted. The rate of change in the average temperature of the ingot or the cooling rate, r , is given by:

$$r = \frac{\dot{q}}{\rho C_p V} \quad (2.3)$$

where ρ is the density, C_p the specific heat and V the volume ($V = Ad$ roughly). Combining the first and third equations we obtain

$$r \cong \frac{2k\sigma}{\alpha E \rho C_p d^2} \quad (2.4)$$

To insure that plastic flow does not take place, the cooling rate must be such that the yield point at any temperature is not exceeded. If we assume that stresses must not exceed approximately 100 psi, and all the heat is being extracted from the bottom of a one-inch-thick casting, then the cooling rate must not exceed 35°C/hr. for KCl. In cylindrical castings, some heat is extracted from the mold walls which also produces a radial temperature gradient over distances as large as four inches in our large ingots. If this is the case, the cooling rate should not exceed 2°C/hr. In combination, the overall cooling rate must be somewhere between 2 and 35°C/hr.

Clearly, in order to prevent the establishment of these residual stresses, the cooling rate and temperature uniformity of the casting must be carefully controlled. Since this may be difficult to accomplish in practice, we are also investigating the effectiveness of post fabrication annealing to remove residual stresses.

3.0 OPTICAL PROPERTIES OF FLUORIDES

3.1 Infrared Absorption

The basic argument in favor of the fluorides as the materials most suitable for high-power laser windows in the 2-6 μm range are already well established, and relate directly to the predicted "failure" mechanisms of a window or lens subjected to high-power radiation. Deterioration is caused first by thermal distortion of the system elements and results in changes in focal length and aberration effects. At higher power levels, plastic flow, melting, and fracture of the optical elements will take place to give irreversible changes in the system. Uncontrolled power reflection from distorted or broken elements can then lead to damage of components not considered part of the high-power optical path itself.

The specific case of distortion and fracture of window elements has been considered in some detail, both in these laboratories⁴⁻⁶ and at Rand Corporation.^{7,8} The figures of merit which have been derived to characterize candidate window materials are summarized in Table 3-1. Regardless of the mode of operation, pulsed or CW, or of the cooling configuration, the materials factor governing distortional failure is $(\beta\chi)^{-1}$ or $(\beta_s\chi)^{-1}$, and the factor governing resistance to failure by fracture is $\sigma/\alpha\beta E$ or $\sigma/\alpha\beta_s E$, for bulk loss (β) and surface loss (β_s) respectively. The alkaline earth fluorides have the double advantage of an extremely low predicted loss coefficient β , and the lowest optical distortion parameter (χ) of all the various ionic and partially covalent semiconductor compounds presently under consideration for laser windows.

The fundamental, unavoidable optical absorption mechanism operative in fluorides at wavelengths near 6 μm is the excitation of lattice vibrations, primarily as a multiphonon process; that is, the simultaneous excitation of several lattice modes, together with various combinations of mode excitation and de-excitations.

In the past, quantitative analysis of multiphonon absorptions has been relatively useless in predicting the actual level of absorption. Our

TABLE 3-1a

Figures of Merit for Bulk Absorption Only

| | Fracture | Optical Distortion at Wavelength (λ) |
|-------------|--|---|
| Edge-cooled | $(\frac{\sigma_c}{\alpha\beta E}) \cdot K$ watts | $(\frac{\lambda}{\beta_x}) \cdot \frac{K}{R}$ watts |
| Face-cooled | $(\frac{\sigma_c}{\alpha\beta E}) \cdot (K + \dots h_S^* R)$ " | $(\frac{\lambda}{\beta_x}) \cdot (\frac{K}{R} + \dots h_S^*)$ " |
| Pulsed | $(\frac{\sigma_c}{\alpha\beta E}) \cdot (\frac{CR^2}{t})$ " | $(\frac{\lambda}{\beta_x}) \cdot (\frac{CR}{t})$ " |

TABLE 3-1b

Figures of Merit for Surface Absorption Only

| | Fracture | Optical Distortion |
|-------------|---|---|
| Edge-cooled | $(\frac{\sigma_c}{\alpha\beta_s E}) \cdot KR$ watts | $(\frac{\lambda}{\beta_s x}) \cdot K$ watts |
| Face-cooled | $(\frac{\sigma_c}{\alpha\beta_s E}) \cdot (KR + \dots h_S^* R^2)$ " | $(\frac{\lambda}{\beta_s x}) \cdot (K + \dots h_S^* R)$ " |
| Pulsed | $(\frac{\sigma_c}{\alpha\beta_s E}) \cdot (\frac{CR^3}{t})$ " | $(\frac{\lambda}{\beta_s x}) \cdot (\frac{CR^2}{t})$ " |

In this table:

σ_c is the critical failure stress
 α is the expansion coefficient
 β is the bulk absorption coefficient
 β_s is the surface absorption coefficient
 E is the Young's modulus
 K is the thermal conductivity
 h_S^* is the surface heat transfer coefficient
 R is the window radius

C is the specific heat
 t is the pulse length
 x is an optical distortion parameter
 $= \frac{dn}{dT} + (1+\nu)\alpha(n-1) + \frac{1}{2}n^3\alpha E \langle \pi \rangle$
 where
 n = index of refraction
 ν = Poisson's ratio
 $\langle \pi \rangle$ = an averaged stress-optic coefficient

experiments on a number of fluorides and other halides, however, have shown that there exists a characteristic wavelength (λ) dependence for the absorption coefficient, namely

$$\beta = \beta_0 \exp - \left(\frac{\lambda_0}{\lambda} \right) = \beta_0 \exp - \left(\frac{\bar{\nu}}{\bar{\nu}_0} \right) \quad (3.1)$$

where β_0 lies in the range $10^4 - 10^5 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ and $\lambda_0 (= 1/\bar{\nu}_0)$ is related to the free space wavelength associated with the zone center-longitudinal vibrational mode. Experimentally, the value of λ_0 is approximately 4.5 times the mode wavelength. The actual values that have been derived for a number of IR materials are listed in Table 3-2.

TABLE 3-2
EXTRAPOLATED MULTIPHONON LOSS FACTOR FOR
CANDIDATE MATERIALS

| Material | 6 μm | 5.3 μm | 3.8 μm | 2.8 μm | 2 μm |
|------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| BaF ₂ | $\approx 10^{-5}$ | $\approx 10^{-6}$ | $< 10^{-6}$ | $< 10^{-6}$ | $< 10^{-6}$ |
| SrF ₂ | $\approx 2 \times 10^{-4}$ | $\approx 10^{-5}$ | $< 10^{-6}$ | $< 10^{-6}$ | $< 10^{-6}$ |
| CaF ₂ | 1.8×10^{-3} | 3×10^{-4} | $< 10^{-6}$ | $< 10^{-6}$ | $< 10^{-6}$ |
| MgF ₂ | 8×10^{-2} | 1.2×10^{-2} | 6.5×10^{-5} | $< 10^{-6}$ | $< 10^{-6}$ |
| MgO | 0.2 | 2×10^{-2} | 0.6×10^{-4} | $\approx 10^{-6}$ | $< 10^{-6}$ |

Excess loss { Initial Requirements |||||
Stringent Requirements ===

From the data in Table 3-2, it is obvious that, as a group, the fluorides, in pure form, are capable of satisfying the requirements of $\beta < 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ at the important laser wavelengths, 5.3 μm (CO), 3.8 μm (DF) and 2.8 μm (HF).

3.2 Optical Scattering

The optical quality of an otherwise transparent material free from absorptive loss, and with perfect optical surfaces, will be determined by

optical inhomogeneity produced either by built-in strain, by density changes in composites where there are two or more components, by porosity, or by refractive-index discontinuities at the boundaries of noncubic crystallites.

A polycrystalline material with cubic crystal symmetry, such as an alkaline earth fluoride, will not scatter if it is 100 percent dense, with no pores. The crystalline boundaries, while recognized as discontinuities at X-ray wavelengths, will be essentially invisible at all wavelengths greater than 10\AA notwithstanding the size of the crystallites. Pores or inclusions smaller than $0.1\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ will produce wide-angle scatter that depends on wavelength, decreasing as the wavelength increases approximately as $1/\lambda^4$ in the visible and IR region. Larger pores or inclusions will scatter in a manner depending on their shape and orientation to a degree that will decrease as $1/\lambda^2$ in the visible and near-IR and eventually as $1/\lambda^4$ at longer wavelengths.

In practice, even single crystals in general show the presence of discrete scatter centers throughout the bulk. Their nature is unknown, but oxide, sulphate or carbonate precipitates are likely candidates. The likelihood of aggregation of similar impurities in polycrystalline materials implies that particular attention must be paid to prepurification of starting materials and heat treatment procedures.

4.0 MECHANICAL PROPERTIES AND STRENGTHENING OF ALKALINE EARTH FLUORIDES

4.1 Introduction

A primary objective of this program is to fabricate high-strength alkaline earth fluorides using common metallurgical strengthening and fabrication techniques, keeping in mind the feasibility and cost of scale-up to the desired size. The effort on strengthening and fabrication of alkali halide materials for the 10.6 μm laser window has demonstrated the feasibility and applicability of these strengthening and fabrication techniques. In the case of the alkali halides, increases in yield and fracture strengths of well over an order of magnitude have been shown to be possible.¹

On the other hand, background information, available for a large portion of the alkali halide work, is lacking for the alkaline earth fluorides. Therefore, discussion of hardening and fabrication techniques for these materials must rely on far less available experimental data. However, the alkaline earth fluorides, as pure materials, are significantly stronger than the halides, and the incremental increases in strength required for them to be useful window materials are proportionately less. In this context we will discuss various possible strengthening techniques for the alkaline earth fluorides, keeping in mind their unique chemical and crystallographic properties. Specifically, the effects of grain size, solid-solution alloying, and precipitation hardening will be discussed as strengthening mechanisms, since we propose these as the techniques for producing strong polycrystalline high-power laser windows.

4.2 Strengthening Mechanisms

4.2.1 Grain size effects

The efficacy of grain size reduction in increasing the yield strength of the alkali halides is now fairly well documented. According to the Von Mises criterion, for a randomly oriented polycrystalline solid to deform plastically, it must be presumed that each grain is capable of undergoing

perfectly general strain in order to conform to the distortion of its neighbors. At least five independent slip systems are required to satisfy this general requirement. Even in those materials in which five independent slip systems are operative, dislocations pile up at grain boundaries and restrict macroscopic plasticity. It can be shown that this leads to an inverse square root ($d^{-1/2}$) dependence of yield strength on grain size, the so-called Hall-Petch relationship. This relationship is observed for many ductile materials and has been demonstrated to be true for polycrystalline KCl.⁹

In the fluorite structure materials CaF_2 , SrF_2 , and BaF_2 , the most active slip system at low temperature is $\{100\} \langle 1\bar{1}0 \rangle$ ¹⁰⁻¹² which gives only three independent systems.¹³ In fact, even this system is relatively inoperative in CaF_2 at room temperature, and both single and polycrystals of this material fail by brittle fracture with essentially no macroscopic yielding. However, above about 200°C the two $\{110\} \langle 1\bar{1}0 \rangle$ systems become active in CaF_2 and, along with the three $\{100\} \langle 1\bar{1}0 \rangle$ systems, give the necessary five independent systems. Thus, polycrystalline CaF_2 at elevated temperatures does deform plastically.¹⁴ Presumably SrF_2 and BaF_2 , also having the fluorite crystal structure, behave similarly at elevated temperatures. In fact, they are probably more plastic than CaF_2 because of their smaller ionic character, as indicated by their larger lattice parameters. However, little information is available on the plastic behavior of these materials except on a microscopic scale.^{11, 12}

At temperatures near 300°K, most of the alkaline earth fluorides, both single and polycrystals, fail by brittle fracture. Fracture in polycrystalline materials which undergo only a small amount of plastic deformation as single crystals can be initiated by crack nuclei produced by deformation.¹⁵⁻¹⁸ Analysis of this mechanism leads to an inverse square root dependence of fracture strength on grain size. Since CaF_2 , SrF_2 and BaF_2 all exhibit at least microplastic behavior at room temperature, it might be expected that their fracture strength will follow a Petch relationship. Therefore, fracture strength of the alkaline earth halides should increase as the grain size decreases and should also increase

if dislocation motion is restricted by solid solution or precipitation hardening. This, of course, assumes adequate surface preparation so that surface flaws are not strength limiting. At present, whether the existence of surface flaws or microplasticity is the strength limiting factor is not known.

4.2.2 Solid-solution strengthening

4.2.2.1 General

If fracture in these materials is nucleated by a dislocation pile-up mechanism, solid solution hardening will increase the fracture strength simply because it impedes dislocation motion. Therefore, as part of this program, we are investigating solid-solution alloying as a means of increasing the strength of alkaline earth fluorides. In fact, because of the divalent alkaline earth ions, these materials offer some interesting possibilities for solid-solution effects not available in the alkali halides.

4.2.2.2 Divalent additions

As solid solutions are made between divalent alkaline earth fluorides, the resistance to plastic flow will increase simply because of the spherical distortion of the lattice caused by ions of slightly different size impeding dislocation motion. In the alkali halides, we and others have obtained increases in yield strength of KCl-KBr alloys from 250 psi to over 2000 psi near the 50-50 composition. However, with such concentrated solid solutions, a significant decrease in thermal conductivity, coupled with the considerable decrease in plasticity, makes the material extremely thermal-shock sensitive and almost impossible to work with. Since a comparable decrease in thermal conductivity would be expected in the alkaline earth fluorides with questionable improvement in strength, the investigation of solid solutions of the divalent fluorides does not offer much promise of improved materials.

4.2.2.3 Aliovalent additions

In contrast to monovalent impurities in the alkali halides, divalent impurities produce very significant increases in yield stresses at very low

concentrations. In fact, the yield strength of KCl single crystals, for example, can be increased by a factor of over twenty by the addition of a few hundred parts per million of Sr^{2+} .^{1,3} This difference in behavior between monovalent and divalent impurities in KCl has been observed for a number of different impurities.¹⁹ Here again, virtually no information exists on the effects of aliovalent impurities on the alkaline earth fluorides. However, an increase in oxygen content of only 40 ppm in CaF_2 single crystals has been observed to decrease dislocation velocity by almost an order of magnitude.²⁰ Also, one of the few pieces of data on fluorides indicates that small additions of Nd^{3+} to CaF_2 can significantly decrease dislocation mobility.²¹

Several explanations of the strong hardening effect of aliovalent impurities have been proposed. Several possible mechanisms have been suggested, based on impurity-defect dipole pairs interacting with dislocation motion. One mechanism in which these dipoles can impede dislocation motion is by the tetragonal distortion produced along the dipole axis.²² In the case of additions such as YF_3 and other rare earths in CaF_2 , the extra fluorine goes into an interstitial site in the fluorite lattice.²³ The interstitial F^- coupled with the Y^{3+} on a Ca^{2+} site forms a dipole pair which produces a nonspherical lattice distortion.²⁴ This distortion would be expected to be as effective as divalent impurity-vacancy pairs are in the alkali halides.

The alkaline earth fluorides also offer greater flexibility than the alkali halides in that both trivalent and monovalent impurity additions may be used. The possibility exists in the alkaline earth fluorides for paired substitutions such as NaF and YF_3 , together in CaF_2 . In this case, no lattice defects should form and the Na^+ and Y^{3+} should produce a nearest cation neighbor pair producing the nonspherical lattice distortion and attendant hardening discussed above. Furthermore, the solubility of such a paired substitution should be much greater, permitting the possibility of greater hardening.

4.3 Systems Being Investigated

The mechanical behavior of the alkaline earth fluorides has been investigated only to a very limited extent. Because the amount of plasticity exhibited by these materials is uncertain and because of the effect of plasticity on strength, the efficacy of various strengthening techniques is questionable. In fact, the effects of grain size and alloying on mechanical properties has not been studied in these materials at all. Furthermore, only limited phase equilibria exist for potential alloy systems of these materials, making the choice of materials systems even more difficult. Despite these difficulties, and in order to develop materials with properties and processing techniques amenable to scale up, a few systems can be specified based on our experience with the alkali halides and the qualifying factors discussed above.

Table 4-1 lists some pertinent properties of the alkaline earth fluorides. As pointed out in our earlier discussion, these data indicate that only SrF_2 and BaF_2 meet the requisite low-optical-absorption requirements out to six micrometers. However, SrF_2 is clearly preferable to BaF_2 because it has a much lower solubility and higher intrinsic hardness. The properties of CaF_2 are similar to those of SrF_2 with the exceptions of the higher absorption coefficient and lower solubility of CaF_2 . Furthermore, CaF_2 and SrF_2 have lattice parameters and cation radii within fifteen percent of each other and available phase equilibria indicate, as might be expected, that they form a continuous series of solid solutions.²⁵ Due to the similarities in these materials, a somewhat better understanding of the mechanical properties of CaF_2 ,¹⁴ and greater availability of phase equilibria data on CaF_2 -based systems, the initial efforts are being directed to CaF_2 and, where successful, will be transferred to the desired SrF_2 system. For example, the effects of paired substitutions of YF_3 and NaF on the properties of CaF_2 are being determined. If, as expected, increases in mechanical properties are obtained, similar substitutions will be tried with SrF_2 .

TABLE 4-1

PROPERTIES OF ALKALINE EARTH FLUORIDES*

| | MgF_2 | CaF_2 | SrF_2 | BaF_2 |
|---|--|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Melting point ($^{\circ}\text{C}$) | 1312 | 1408 | 1400 | 1320 |
| Crystal structure | tetragonal, (SnO_2) | cubic | cubic, (CaF_2) | cubic, (CaF_2) |
| Lattice parameter (\AA) | $a_0 = 4.623$ $C_0 = 3.052$ | 5.46 | 5.800 | 6.200 |
| Cation radius (\AA) | 0.66 | 0.99 | 1.13 | 1.34 |
| Minimum optical absorption at $5.3\mu\text{m}$ (cm^{-1}) | 1.2×10^{-2} | 3×10^{-4} | $\sim 10^{-5}$ | $\sim 10^{-6}$ |
| Thermal expansion coefficient ($10^{-6} \text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}^{-1}$) | $a_{\perp} = 11.89$ $a_{\parallel} = 16.21$ | 18.5 | 17.5 | 18.1 |
| Thermal conductivity (cgs) | 0.0360 | 0.0237 | 0.0239 | 0.0287 |
| Elastic modulus (10^6 psi) | 16.6 - 24.5 | 14.2 - 21.0 | 14.5 | 9.6 |
| Hardness (Knoop) | 415 | 120 - 163 | 130 | 65 - 82 |
| Water solubility ($\mu\text{g}/\text{ml H}_2\text{O}$) | 76 | 16 | 110 | 1700 |
| Density (g/cc) | 3.177 | 3.181 | 4.20 | 4.886 |

* Room temperature and single crystal data from a number of sources, primarily C.S. Sahagian and C. A. Pitha, "Compendium on High Power Infrared Laser Window Materials," Rept. AFCRL-72-0170, March 9, 1972.

5.0 FABRICATION PROCESSES FOR FLUORIDES

5.1 Casting

One of the primary goals of this program is to investigate the feasibility of fusion casting as a fabrication technique for optical materials. As we have shown with the alkali halides, casting is advantageous because it is a conceptually simple technique which produces high-density materials with the potential of easy scale up. Of course, problems with casting do exist; a major one is the formation of voids, cracking and residual stresses brought about by the large thermal expansion coefficients, poor thermal conductivities and large volume contractions on freezing of ionic compounds.

For the alkaline earth fluorides, the situation is much more easily controlled since they have smaller expansion coefficients, higher thermal conductivities and smaller volume contractions on freezing than the alkali halides. For example, Fig. 5-1 compares the volume contraction of SrF_2 (a typical alkaline earth fluoride) with those of KCl (a typical alkali halide), aluminum and silver relative to their respective melting points, T_m . As might be expected, the volume contractions of the fluorides during freezing are considerably less than the alkali halides, yet larger than metals. On the other hand, the volume contraction for the fluoride in the solid during cooling is more similar to the alkali halides. Nevertheless, the volume contraction still strongly suggests that the alkaline earth fluorides must be directionally solidified, leaving the free liquid to absorb the volume contraction just as with the alkali halides. In any event, our experience with both the halides and fluorides indicates that the fluorides are considerably easier to fabricate by casting than the halides.

5.2 Hot Forging

As we have done with the alkali halides, we are investigating hot-forging of the fluoride alloys as a means to improve microstructure and mechanical properties. By a proper sequence of deformation and recrystallization heat treatments, it is expected that the grain size can be refined in order to obtain the full benefit of the strengthening behavior of small grain sizes.

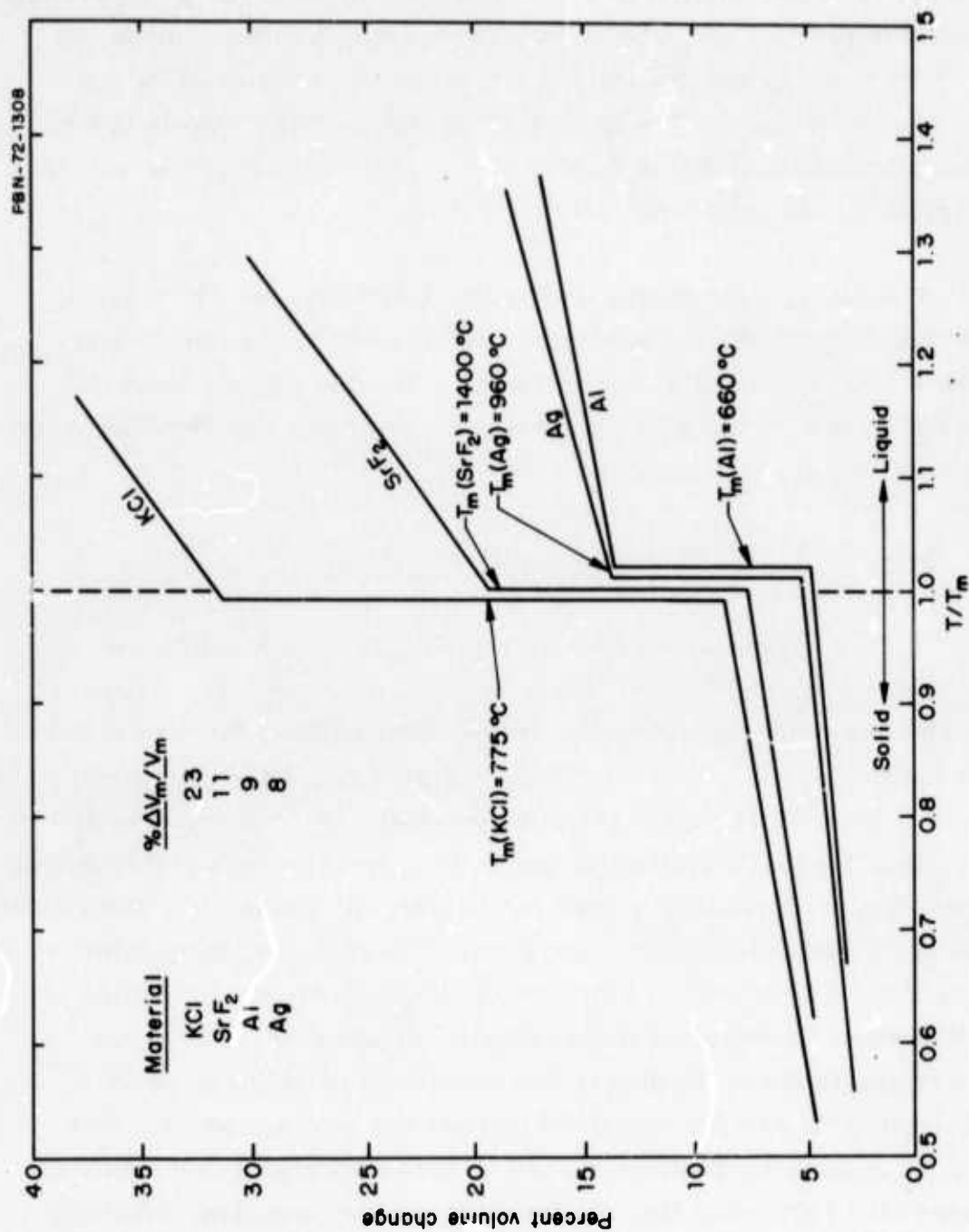


Fig. 5-1 Comparison of the Volume Contraction of SrF₂ Near the Melting Point, T_m , with Those of KCl, Aluminum and Silver.

Hot forging of KCl, both in our own and other laboratories, has produced materials with uniform grain sizes below ten micrometers and yield strengths in excess of 2000 psi. One of the main difficulties with the technique is that the temperature and stress cycles must be carefully controlled to prevent secondary grain growth which may result in, at most, very large-grained material, or, at least, a material having a duplex microstructure. However, the time-temperature cycle can be properly controlled to give a uniform, fine-grain-size microstructure which produces the high yield point.

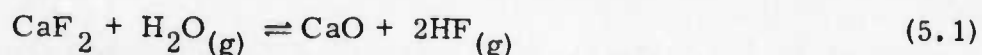
Because of their higher melting points, different slip systems, and different slip-system temperature dependencies, the hot-forging parameters for the alkaline earth fluorides are doubtlessly quite different from those of the alkali halides. Preliminary experiments in our laboratory indicate this to be the case.

5.3 Starting Materials and Purification

All three types of possible impurities, dissolved anion and cation impurities and second phase particles, are more likely to occur in the alkaline earth fluorides than in the alkali halides because of the higher melting points of the fluorides. Cation impurities in commercially-available starting material may not be particularly deleterious to optical properties at levels of 1000 parts per million level or less if they are in solid solution as fluorides, unless, of course, the particular fluoride has an extremely high absorption coefficient. For example, magnesium would be expected to be a common impurity in CaF_2 . A Mg concentration of 1000 ppm would be expected to contribute only about $\beta \cong 10^{-5} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ at $5 \mu\text{m}$ wavelength since the absorption coefficient of MgF_2 is about 10^{-2} at this region. If cations dissolved as fluorides are a problem, then getting rid of them by processes such as zone refining is more difficult because of the relatively high melting point of the fluorides. Impurity cation removal is probably more effectively handled by wet chemical processing of the fluorides or of their precursor chemicals. Therefore, in this program, we are initially investigating the suitability of various

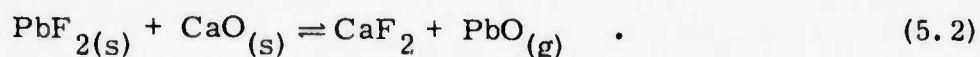
commercially-available starting chemicals, relating cation impurity content with optical properties and attempting to determine the minimal level of purity necessary to satisfy properties.

Doubtlessly, the anion impurities will be much more troublesome, particularly oxygen. First, at low levels, oxygen can combine with the impurity cations to form precipitates, or impurity-oxygen pairs, or clusters which will degrade optical properties considerably. At higher oxygen or water vapor levels, reactions typified by:



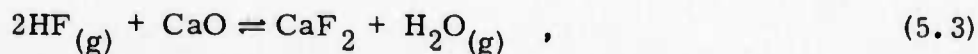
are thermodynamically favorable.

If powdered starting fluorides which have been exposed to oxygen or water-vapor-containing atmospheres are used, some pretreatment or in-process treatment must be used to remove any oxides present. There have been two common techniques by which this has been accomplished. First, small additions of lead fluoride are effective if the oxide concentration is not too large, since the following reaction is favorable:

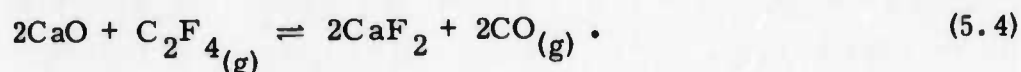


Also, at the melting point of CaF_2 , the vapor pressure of PbF_2 is sufficiently high so that any excess is effectively removed by evaporation. This is a relatively simple and easily used technique.

Another somewhat more difficult purification reaction is:



since a system resistant to HF must be used. This purification reaction is most effectively carried out on powders which are then either sintered or melted to reduce surface area prior to further processing. During the initial part of this program, our efforts are concentrating on using PbF_2 and other fluorine producing scavenger materials²⁸ such as teflon (tetrafluoroethylene) to purify the fluoride materials, according to the following reaction:



5.4 Residual Stress

As with the cast halides, high residual stresses in the cast fluorides are high enough to cause cracking during post fabrication cutting and polishing. However, by the same analysis as used before, the cooling rate should not exceed 760°C/hr. for CaF_2 if all the heat were extracted from the bottom of a one-inch-thick casting. Correspondingly, the radial temperature gradient in a cylindrical casting eight inches in diameter would require a cooling rate not to exceed 50°C/hr. Clearly, the problem is not nearly as severe as with the halides, but nonetheless the cooling rate and temperature uniformity must be controlled in order either to prevent the establishment of residual stresses during the casting process or to remove them by a post fabrication annealing procedure.

6.0 RESULTS

6.1 Alkali Halides

6.1.1 Single crystals

A number of single crystals of undoped and SrCl_2 -doped KCl grown during the program previously funded under AFCRL Contract No. F19628-72-C-0307 were used for these studies. Starting materials for these samples had been "reagent" grade chemicals.

6.1.1.1 Hardness and precipitation

Hardness is determined with a Vickers DPH indenter and a 10 gm load mounted on a Vickers M-55 metallograph. Determined were the effects of heat treatment time and temperature on precipitation and hardness of various SrCl_2 doped samples of KCl. Samples were never larger than about $1.5 \times 1.5 \times 0.5$ cm. They were first solution annealed for 15 minutes at either 650 or 700°C followed by air quenching to room temperature. Subsequent anneals were carried out at temperatures of 200, 250, 375, 425, and 500°C for times of 1/4, 1, 4, and 16 hours. Hardness was determined for each heat treatment with at least four hardness measurements for each test.

From plots of hardness versus temperature for each time of heat treatment and for each of the three SrCl_2 concentrations (5000 ppm, 1 and 2 percent SrCl_2 nominal), the temperatures at which hardness dropped to 90 percent of the solution annealed hardness value were determined. The decrease in hardness is associated with precipitation of a second phase (presumably K_2SrCl_4) as evidenced by the turbidity developed during annealing.

These results are plotted in Fig. 6-1 as a typical TTT (time, temperature, transformation) type plot.

The results show that a 10 percent drop in hardness as a result of precipitation occurs in a very short time between 350 and 450°C for

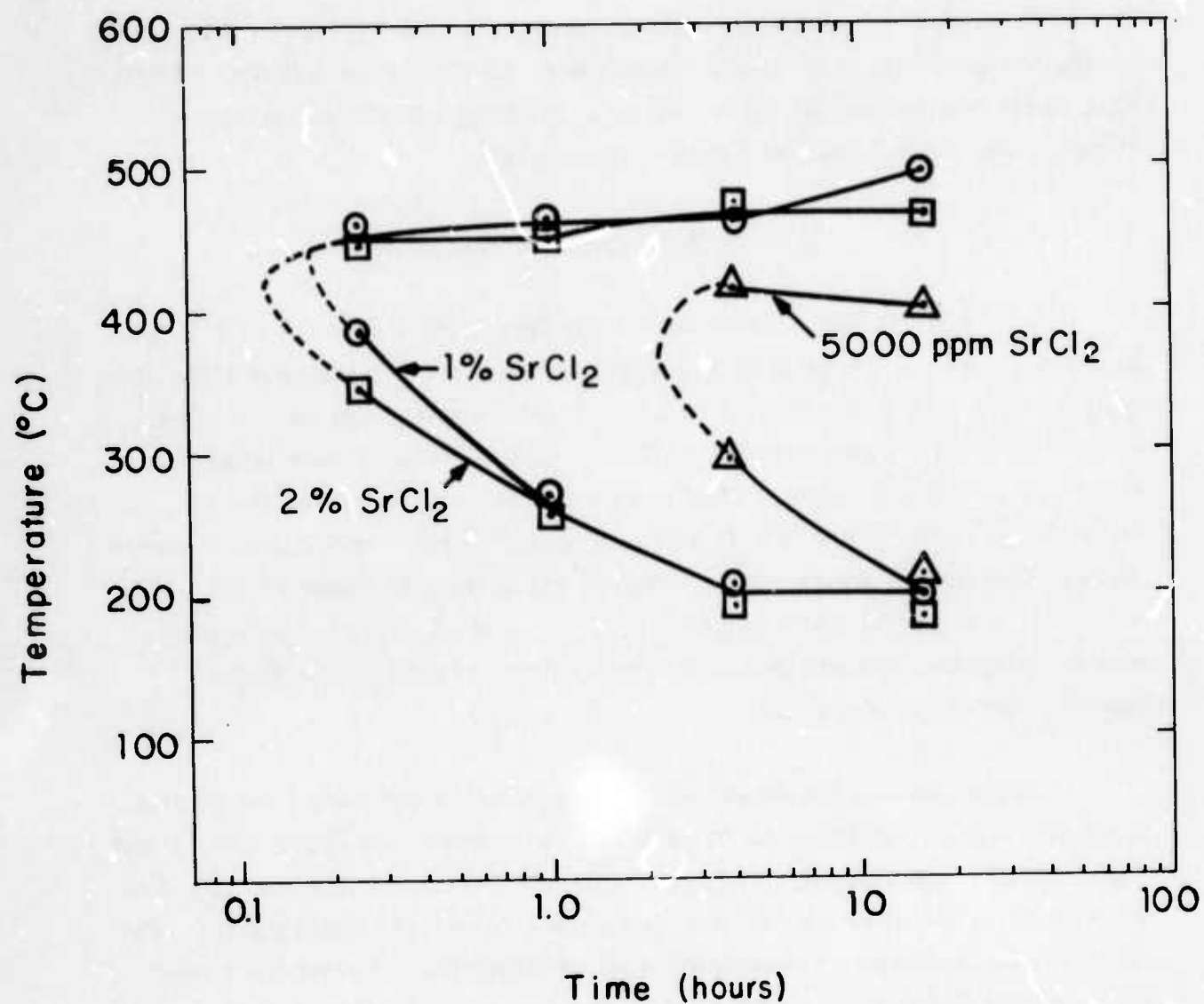


Fig. 6-1 Time-Temperature-Transformation Data for Precipitation Softening in SrCl₂-KCl Alloys. The curves are for ten percent decrease in hardness.

the highest doped samples (1 and 2 percent SrCl_2 nominal), with very similar results for both 1 and 2 percent samples, indicating a limit has been reached. For the lower concentration (5000 ppm, SrCl_2 nominal), the precipitation occurs in longer times at similar temperatures, as expected. These data suggest that little difficulty should be experienced in cooling a nominal 5000 ppm (~800 ppm actual) crystal without precipitation.

6.1.1.2 Thermal conductivity

Thermal conductivity measurements were taken on samples of the variously doped SrCl_2 -KCl samples using a Colora Thermoconductometer (Dynatech Corporation, distributor in the United States). A sample of the material to be tested is brought into contact with two boiling liquids of differing boiling points. The time is measured for a given quantity which evaporates from the "cold" side of the sample, to flow through the sample. If a calibrated sample with a known heat resistance is measured with a selected liquid pair, the thermal resistance values of subsequent samples can be read directly from a calibration plot. For the present measurements, the liquid pair water/trichloroethylene (boiling points of 100.0 and 87.0°C, respectively) provides a measuring temperature of 93.5°C. The lower boiling point liquid pair methylene chloride/freon 11 (41.6 and 23.8°C, respectively) providing a measuring temperature of 32.7°C produced too much scatter in the data to be of value. Cylindrical samples of about 1.0 cm diameter by 0.5 cm thick were tested. The results are shown in Table 6-1 and show that the thermal conductivity of KCl is little affected by the addition of up to two percent SrCl_2 (added to the melt).

6.1.2 Cast SrCl_2 -KCl

The emphasis of casting in our two zone furnace (Figs. 6-2 and 6-3) during the first six months of this program was directed toward the casting and annealing of fluorides. However, a number of 8-inch diameter KCl castings were made.

TABLE 6-1

THERMAL CONDUCTIVITY OF SrCl_2 -KCl, 93.5°C

| <u>SrCl_2 Added to Melt</u> | <u>Thermal Conductivity (cal/cm sec°C)</u> |
|---|--|
| 0 | .0108 ± .0005 (4) |
| 200 ppm | .0102 ± .0003 (3) |
| 500 ppm | .0095 ± .0004 (4) |
| 1500 ppm | .0093 ± .0004 (3) |
| 5000 ppm | .0099 ± .0005 (5) |
| 1 Percent | .0096 ± .0007 (4) |
| 2 Percent | .0098 ± .0001 (3) |

() = no. of measurements.

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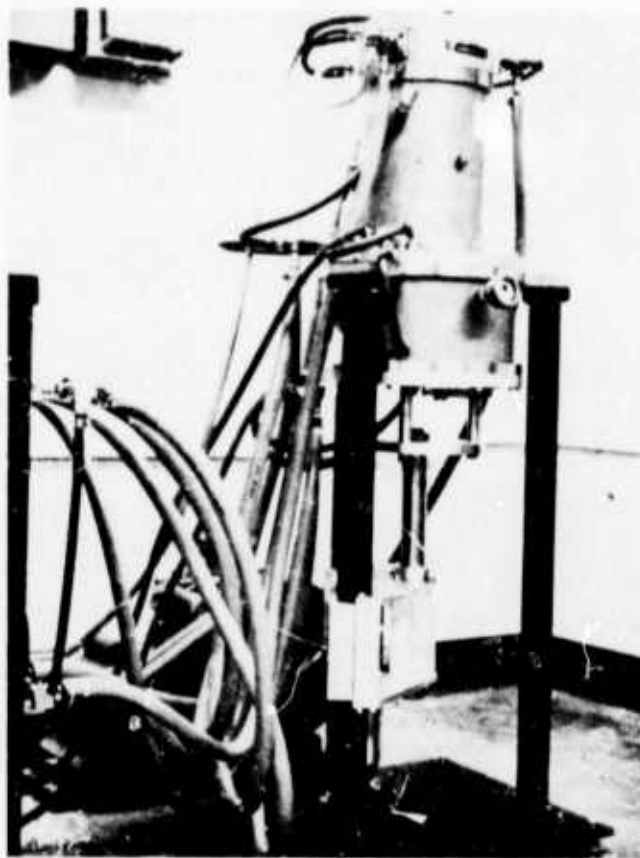


Fig. 6-2 Two Zone Casting Furnace.



Fig. 6-3 Removal of a KCl Casting from the Two Zone Casting Furnace.

All castings, with the exception of two, were made from Merck "Suprapur" KCl and doped with Johnson Matthey high purity (Grade I) SrCl_2 . The technique for casting these large pieces has been detailed previously.¹

During this time, seven high purity castings were made in a 50-ton vacuum hot press furnace (Fig. 6-4) by melting and solidifying in situ. This furnace (an all graphite system), equipped with a diffusion pump, has the capability of better vacuum than the two-zone furnace. The purpose of attempting to cast in this furnace was to evaluate whether or not the better vacuum improved the optical absorption. In the hot press furnace, a 5 1/2-inch diameter ATJ graphite crucible (lined with removable grafoil) with cover was used for casting. Limitations of the system were such that uniform, unidirectional solidification was difficult to achieve. However, small samples from these castings could be analyzed for optical properties which will be discussed later.

6.1.3 Strain annealing

One of the major problems in the casting of the halides is the high residual strains produced during cooling from solidification temperatures. Handling of the cooled castings has been difficult, with cracking of castings being a problem.

Significant results were found during this period in successful annealing runs for the halide castings. All anneals were performed in air using a large muffle furnace. To minimize thermal gradients, each sample was loosely packed in fiberfrax insulating wool and surrounded by two-inch thick firebrick.

Successful annealing is illustrated by Figs. 6-5 and 6-6 for both pure KCl and SrCl_2 -doped KCl samples. Figure 6-5a and 6-6a show the respective samples as cast with high residual strain as viewed through crossed polarizers. Figures 6-5b and 6-6b show the same two samples after the successful annealing treatment of 10 hours at 600°C followed by cooling at 10°C per hour to room temperature.

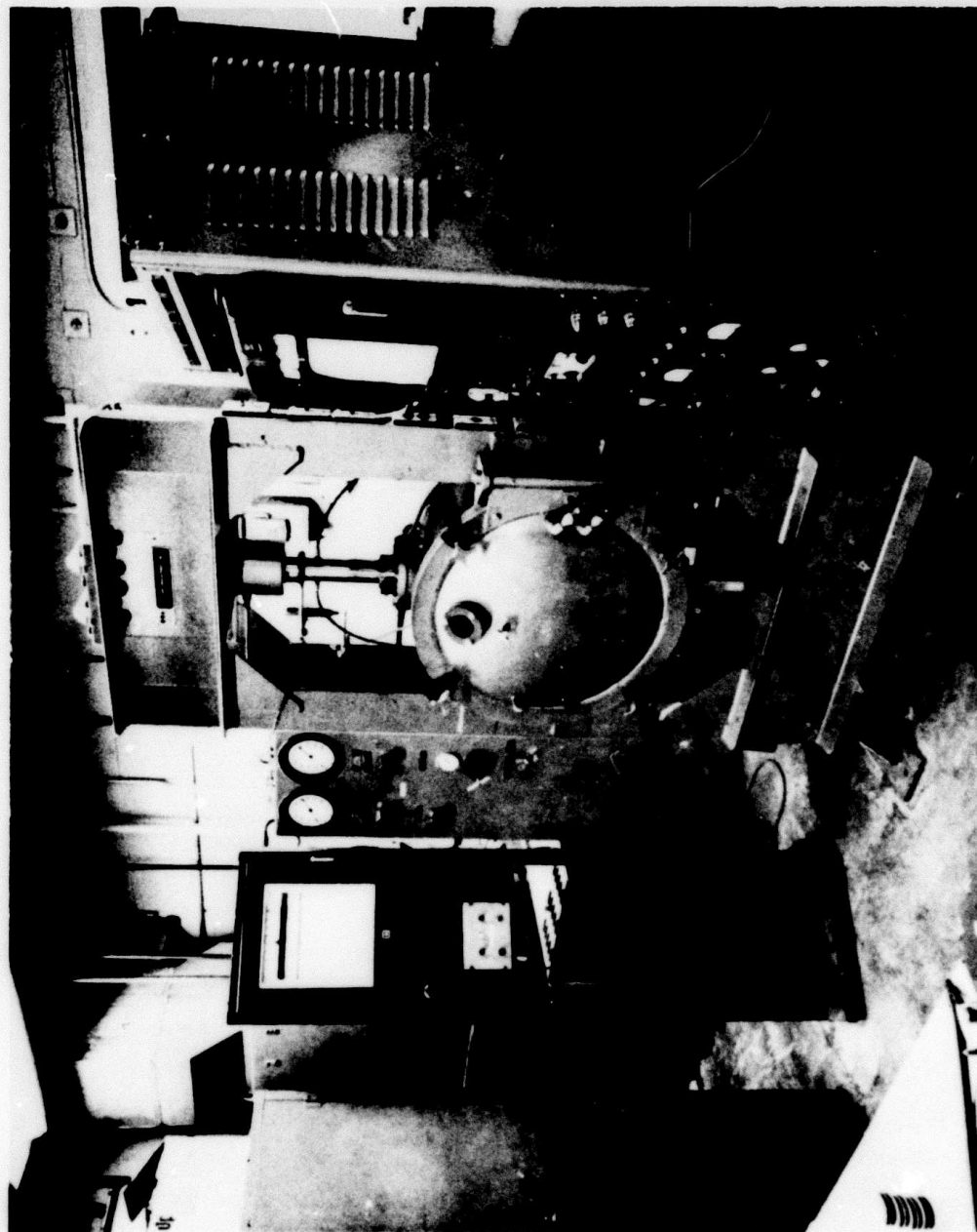


Fig. 6-4 50-Ton Vacuum Hot Press Used for Casting and Hot Forging Polycrystalline Alkaline Earth Fluorides.

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Fig. 6-5a Sample of Polycrystalline KCl As Cast. Viewed through crossed polarizers.

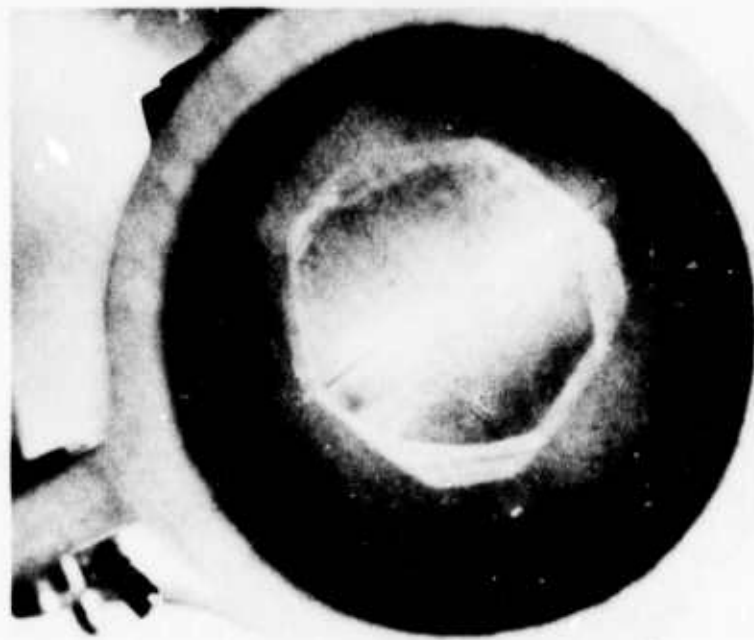


Fig. 6-5b Same Sample After Annealing at 600°C for 10 Hours then Cooled at 10°C/hr.

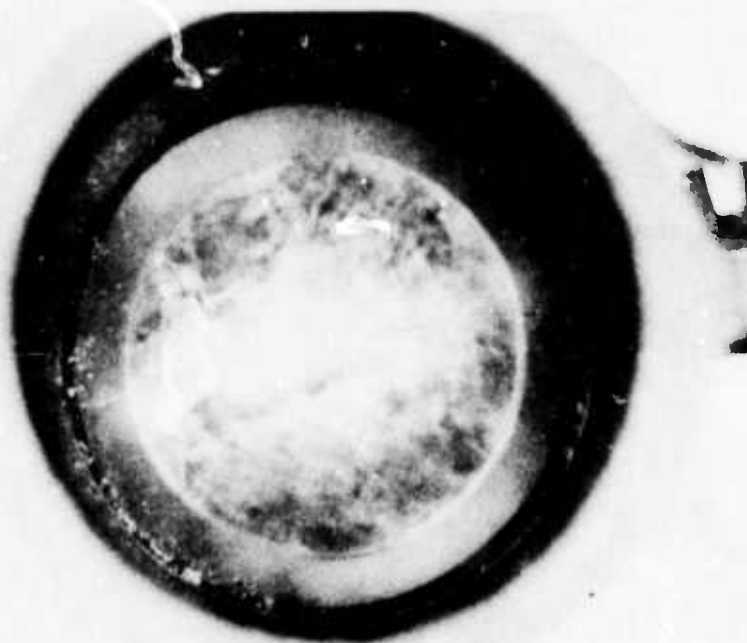


Fig. 6-6a Sample of Polycrystalline $r\text{Cl}_2\text{-KCl}$ Alloy As Cast.
Viewed through crossed polarizers

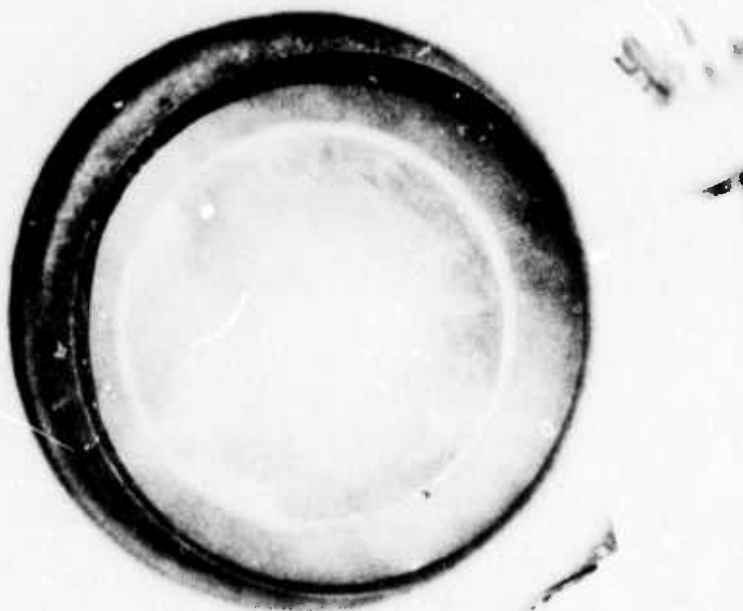


Fig. 6-6b Same After Annealing at 600°C for 10 hrs. and Cooling at 10°C/hr.

As a result of the success in our strain annealing procedure, several of the large-diameter castings were similarly annealed successfully and sent out for optical polishing. However, difficulty was experienced and the specimens cracked during a grinding procedure. Upon polishing, further cracking occurred (perhaps due to strains built up during grinding). It is evident that even as annealed, the castings must be handled with great care.

6.1.4 Optical properties

6.1.4.1 Processing effects

Two castings were made using "reagent" grade KCl that had been purified in our laboratory using a "RAP" technique. This consisted of pulling a quartz tube filled with KCl powder slowly through a furnace at 600°C. The purification consisted of bubbling dry argon through CCl₄ at room temperature and over the powdered KCl for 24 hours. That this treatment was not completely successful is shown by the IR transmission curve for a specimen from a casting of this "purified" KCl, NPC-47. Figure 6-7 shows the broad absorption band centered near 10 μm. Note however that NCO⁻ (2180 cm⁻¹), CO₃⁻⁻ (1400-1500 cm⁻¹) or SO₄⁻⁻ (1100-1200 cm⁻¹) absorption bands are not apparent, whereas for the unpurified "reagent" grade castings they are observed (Fig. 6-8).

Figure 6-9 gives the IR transmission curve for a specimen cut from a large casting of "superpure" material. Note that no detectable impurity bands are present, even though the sample path length is quite long. However, the measured 10.6 μm absorption coefficient for this sample is $4.8 \times 10^{-3} \text{ cm}^{-1}$. This high an apparent absorption coefficient should correspond to an absorption of about 2 percent at 10.6 μm. If this apparent absorption were caused by the broad band near 10 μm, as seen in Figs. 6-7 and 6-8, then a dip in the IR spectrum in Fig. 6-9 comparable to that in Fig. 6-7 would be expected. However, none is observed. The implications of this are discussed more completely later.

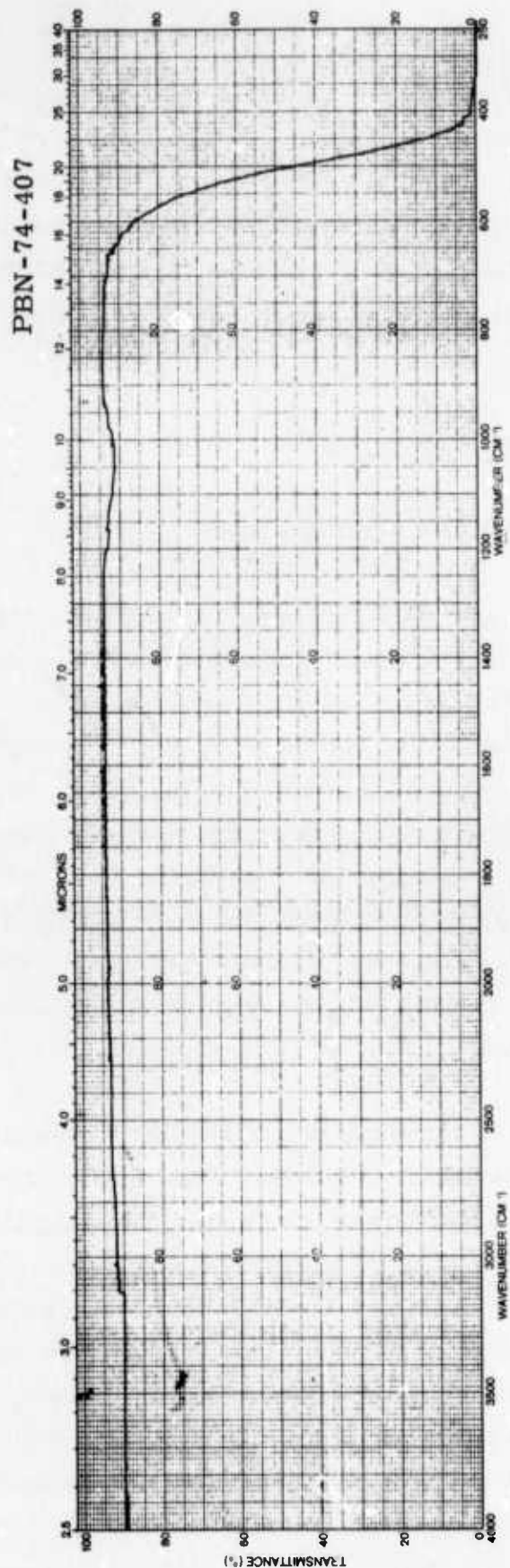


Fig. 6-7 Infrared Spectrum of Sample NPC-47 100 ppm $\text{SrCl}_2\text{-KCl}$ (Purified).
1.7 cm path length.

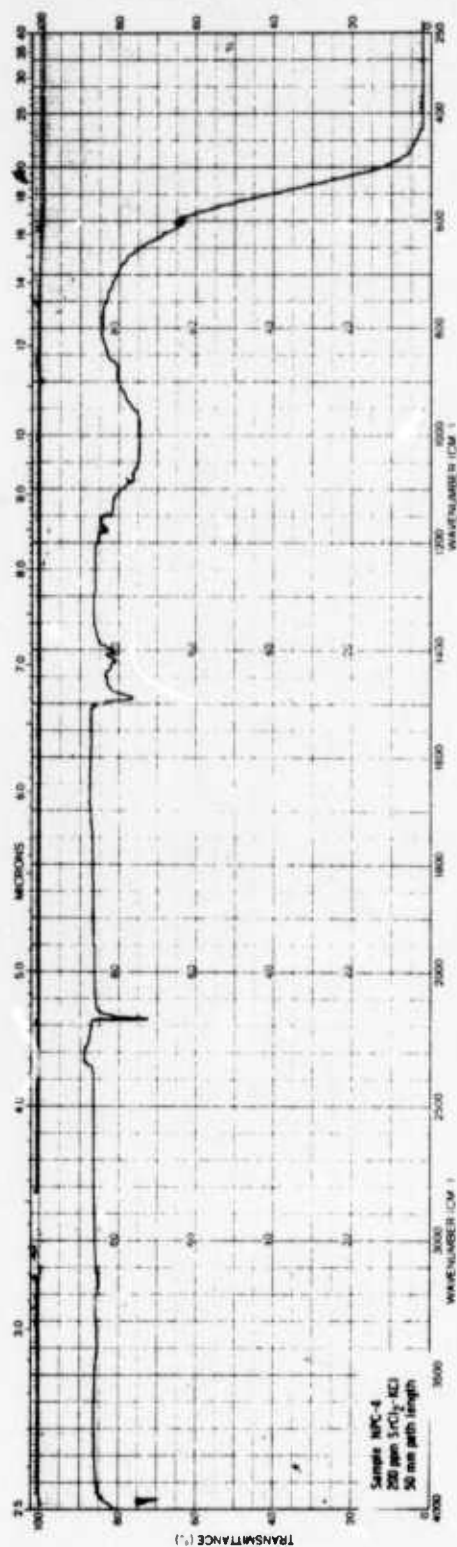


Fig. 6-8 Infrared Transmission Spectrum of Casting NPC-4 (200 ppm nominal SrCl_2).
"Reagent" grade KCl.

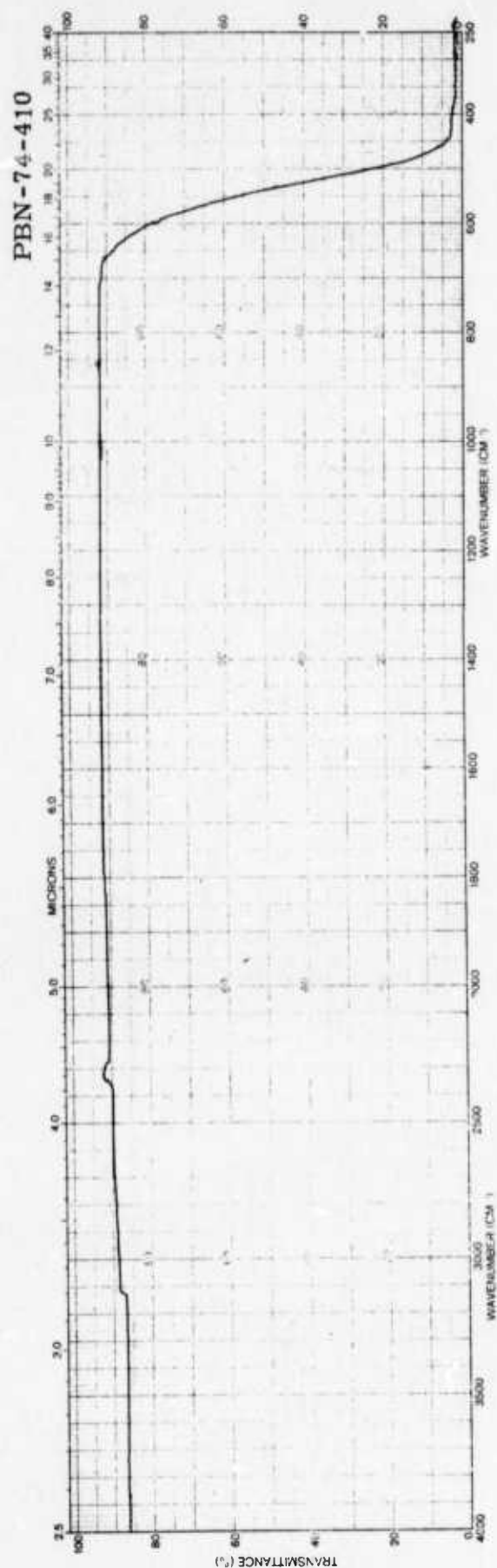


Fig. 6-9 Infrared Spectrum of Sample NPC-40. 200 ppm $\text{SrCl}_2\text{-KCl}$ (Merck). 3.5 cm path length.

Figure 6-10 gives the IR transmission curve for a sample cut from a 5½-inch diameter casting produced in the vacuum hot press furnace. No impurity bands are detectable and the calorimetrically measured 10.6 μm absorption coefficient for this sample is $6.3 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ (uncorrected for surface loss).

Table 6-2 gives the chemical analysis for several selected castings, as well as for the Merck "Suprapur" powder from which castings NPC-22 and 39 were produced. Casting NPC-22 was undoped while casting NPC-39 was nominally doped at 200 ppm SrCl_2 . Casting NPC-47 is the RAP-treated one. In general, no impurity pickup was found in the casting process by either analysis (emission spectroscopy performed by Jarrell-Ash, Waltham, Mass.) or by the IR transmission results. And the RAP-treated casting by analysis is as pure as the others.

6.1.4.2 Scattering centers

In order to better understand the apparent 10.6 μm absorption of various castings and single crystals such as casting NPC-40 (Fig. 6-9) which exhibits a high absorption coefficient with no evidence of a band at 10 μm, it was decided to attempt to correlate absorption and optical scatter. Qualitatively it was found that all samples with low 10.6 μm absorption coefficients scattered less in a He-Ne laser beam than did corresponding samples of high absorption coefficients.

As a result, selected samples of doped and undoped KCl (both cast and single crystal) were microscopically examined at 120× with transmitted light. Samples ranged in thickness from 10 to 20 mm and were examined by focusing from one polished surface through the sample to the opposite polished surface. All scattering centers that were microscopically visible were counted. At least four random fields of view for each sample were counted. Comparison between samples could be obtained by defining a scattering number as the total number of counted particles or voids in the total volume examined.

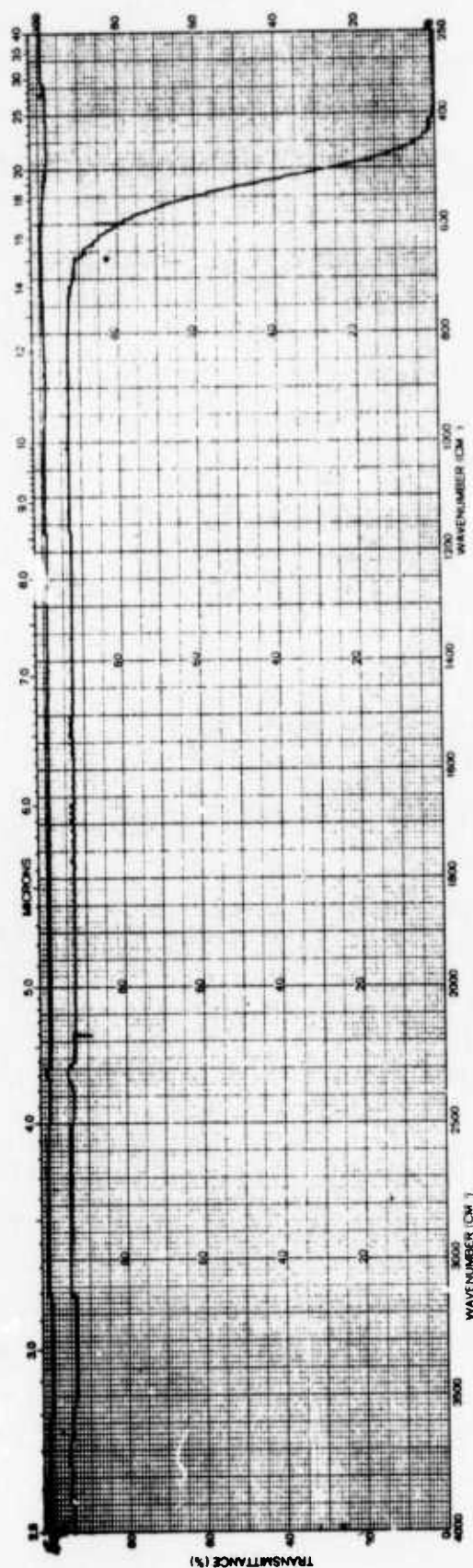


Fig. 6-10 Infrared Spectrum of Sample VHP-213. 200 ppm $\text{SrCl}_2\text{-KCl}$ (Merck). 2.7 cm path length.

TABLE 6-2

ANALYSIS OF KCl CASTINGS AND MERCK "SUPRAPUR" POWDER

| <u>Detected Impurities *</u> | <u>Merck Powder</u> | <u>Casting NPC-22</u> | <u>Casting NPC-39</u> | <u>Casting NPC-47</u> |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mg | < 1 | 1 | 0.5 | 1 |
| Al | 1-10 | 1 | 0.1 | 5 |
| Si | ND | 0.5 | 0.1 | 1 |
| K | H | H | H | H |
| Ca | < 1 | 2 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Fe | ND | 0.1 | ND | 0.3 |
| Cu | ND | 1 | 0.5 | 0.1 |
| Sr | ND | ND | 400 | 300 |
| Mo | ND | 5 | ND | ND |
| Pb | ND | .1 | ND | 0.5 |
| Total Detected Impurities** | 3-13 | 10.7 | 1.7 | 8.4 |

ND ≡ not detected

H ≡ balance

* Results in ppm; 40 additional impurities undetected

** Excluding Sr

The results are summarized in Table 6-3. It gives the sample, its measured $10.6\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ absorption, β , (from a plot of absorption versus length), and the scattering center density.

The results indicate a semiquantitative correlation between β and scatter. The lower absorption samples have very few microscopically visible inclusions, while the greater the number of inclusions, the higher the absorption coefficient. Of course, the higher absorbing samples may have an impurity band near $10\text{ }\mu\text{m}$, but not necessarily, as has been seen. It is not evident whether the residual absorption (above the intrinsic value for KCl at $10.6\text{ }\mu\text{m}$) for the best samples is limited by impurity absorption or by scatter.

6.2 Alkaline Earth Fluorides

6.2.1 Cast fluorides

As mentioned before, the main effort during the first six months of this program was directed toward the fusion casting of the alkaline earth fluorides and primarily of CaF_2 . To that end, both of our large furnaces were used, with most of the casting (70 runs) having been done in the vacuum hot press furnace capable of castings up to about six inches in diameter. The two-zone furnace was used both as a casting furnace (52 runs), an annealing furnace (26 runs), and a purification furnace (2 runs).

Early in the program, when the casting of fluorides was first attempted in the two-zone furnace, a major problem developed. At the high temperatures ($1400\text{--}1500^\circ\text{C}$) required for the casting of fluorides, alumina reacts in the hot zone with the volatile fluorides. As a consequence, the thermocouples and element supports were rapidly destroyed. The problem appeared to be aggravated by the use of PbF_2 added as a scavenger for the purification of CaF_2 . In order to overcome the alumina problem, BN supports were fabricated in the laboratory and all thermocouples were sheathed in molybdenum

TABLE 6-3

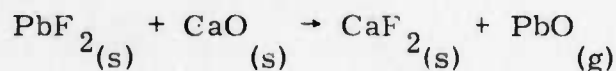
10.6 μm ABSORPTION AND SCATTER

| <u>Specimen</u> | <u>β 10.6 μm</u> | <u>Sample Thickness (mm)</u> | <u>Center Density (cc^{-1})</u> |
|-----------------|---|------------------------------|---|
| 73-85 | $3.7 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ | 10 | 0 |
| 73-62 | 6.1×10^{-4} | 15 | 105 |
| VHP-213 | 6.3×10^{-4} | 27 | 330 |
| 73-50 | 6.7×10^{-4} | 20 | 0 |
| 73-29 | 7.2×10^{-4} | 15 | 0 |
| NPC-22 | 7.8×10^{-4} | 14 | 940 |
| 73-86 | 1.5×10^{-3} | 6 | internal subgrains |
| 72-52 | 2.4×10^{-3} | 16 | 5300 |
| 73-72 | 3.9×10^{-3} | 11 | 2400 |
| TW4 | 3.9×10^{-3} | 12 | $> 3900^*$ |
| NPC-40 | 4.8×10^{-3} | 11 | $> 3300^*$ |
| 72-61 | 5.3×10^{-3} | 10 | 5200 |
| TW3 | 6.3×10^{-3} | 10 | 8800 |
| NPC-31 | 7.4×10^{-3} | 13 | $> 14,000^*$ |
| NPC-35 | 1.3×10^{-2} | 11 | internal subgrains |
| NPC-39 | 1.7×10^{-2} | 10 | $> 14,000^*$ |
| NPC-36 | 1.9×10^{-2} | 10 | $> 14,000^*$ |

* Very nonuniform from field-to-field.

protective tubes. The performance of BN proved unsatisfactory; there was a gradual degradation which eventually rendered them useless. Supports of BeO were ordered and installed, but they too were unsatisfactory; they reacted completely leaving no trace, probably by forming the volatile BeF_2 . Since the furnace could readily be used at temperatures less than 1000°C , strained castings produced in the vacuum hot press were vacuum annealed in the two-zone furnace, as discussed below.

In Tables 6-4 and 6-5 are listed the fluoride castings produced in the vacuum hot press (VHP) furnace. The early runs, as noted, were mainly to set conditions for complete unidirectional solidification. To most runs PbF_2 was added (usually two percent by weight) for the scavenging of any oxide according to the reaction:



as first used by Stockbarger.²⁹

Table 6-4 lists all the pure castings (SrF_2 , BaF_2 and CaF_2) produced, while Table 6-5 lists the castings of CaF_2 with various additions of LaF_3 , YF_3 and/or NaF . Figure 6-11 shows a polished six-inch window of pure CaF_2 cast in our laboratory illustrating the high optical quality that can be achieved.

The procedure to produce castings in the vacuum hot press furnace is as follows. The charge to be melted (fluoride and scavenger) is loaded in a covered ATJ graphite crucible (either 3 or $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter) and placed in the furnace. A vacuum is drawn and when it reaches 10^{-4} torr, the furnace is turned on and brought up to temperature in about 2 hours. The charge is held at 1475°C for 1 hour to insure complete melting (temperature is monitored by means of an optical pyrometer). The temperature is then slowly reduced at $5\text{-}10^\circ\text{C}$ every 10 minutes to 1365°C , at which time either shutdown or further cooling at faster rates to about $1100\text{-}1200^\circ\text{C}$ is initiated. Normally the furnace is shut down at about $1200\text{-}1300^\circ\text{C}$. Cooling to room temperature takes about six hours. Each

TABLE 6-4

VACUUM HOT PRESS (VHP) CASTINGS
PURE FLUORIDES

| <u>VHP No.</u> | <u>Material</u> | <u>Comments</u> |
|---|-----------------|--|
| 144, 146, 148-151 | SrF_2 | Each run a remelt of the previous one |
| 145, 147 | BaF_2 | Castings cracked and full of bubbles |
| 152, 154 | CaF_2 | Hot forged single crystals at 1000°C |
| 158-162 | CaF_2 | Large ($5\frac{1}{2}$ in.) castings to set conditions for unidirectional solidification |
| 163-168, 184 | CaF_2 | Small (3 in.) castings to set conditions |
| 169, 170 | CaF_2 | Large castings with layer of small bubbles very defined |
| 174, 175 | CaF_2 | Large castings, experiments with slotted elements |
| 176-178, 180, 189, 192, 194-196, 202, 203 | CaF_2 | Large castings: excellent castings. 2 percent PbF_2 additions |
| 214, 215 | CaF_2 | Small castings with 10 percent PbF_2 added. Smaller grain size but cracked |
| 216 | CaF_2 | Small casting with $7\frac{1}{2}$ percent PbF_2 . Cracked |
| 224 | CaF_2 | Small casting with 2 percent teflon |
| 256-260 | CaF_2 | Large castings with 2 percent PbF_2 |
| 261, 263, 268 | CaF_2 | Large castings with 5 percent PbF_2 |
| 262, 264, 265 | CaF_2 | Large castings with no PbF_2 |
| 269-270 | CaF_2 | Small castings with 2 percent PbF_2 |
| 271, 272, 276 | CaF_2 | Purified "reagent" grade powder |
| 273 | CaF_2 | Dehydrated "reagent" grade powder |
| 275 | SrF_2 | Excellent casting |
| 278, 280 | CaF_2 | Mixture of starting materials. |

TABLE 6-5

VACUUM HOT PRESS (VHP) CASTINGSFLUORIDE ALLOYS

| <u>VHP No.</u> | <u>Material</u> | <u>Comments</u> |
|----------------|---|------------------|
| 179 | CaF_2 + 0.93 percent NaF + 0.26 percent YF_3 | Cracked |
| 181 | CaF_2 + 0.37 percent NaF + 0.10 percent YF_3 | |
| 182 | CaF_2 + 0.74 percent NaF + 0.21 percent YF_3 | Cracked |
| 183 | CaF_2 + 0.19 percent NaF + 0.05 percent YF_3 | Cracked |
| 185 | CaF_2 + 520 ppm YF_3 | Cracked |
| 186 | CaF_2 + 930 ppm NaF | |
| 187 | CaF_2 + 1860 ppm NaF | |
| 188 | CaF_2 + 500 ppm LaF_3 | |
| 190 | CaF_2 + 1860 ppm NaF | VHP 187 remelted |
| 191 | CaF_2 + 200 ppm LaF_3 | |
| 193 | CaF_2 + 400 ppm LaF_3 | |

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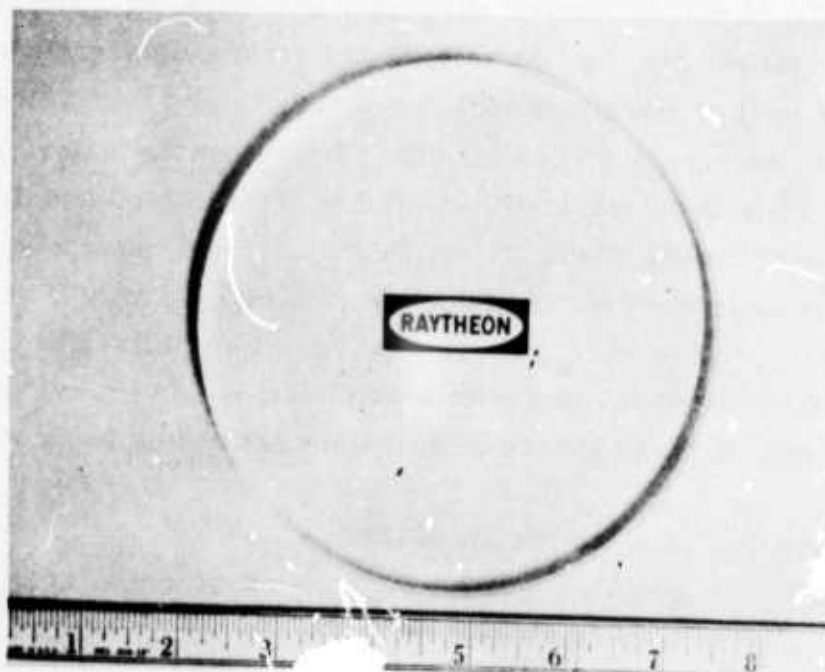
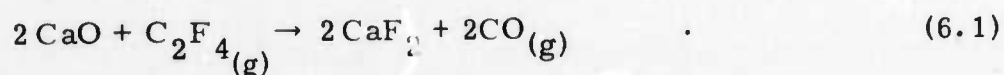


Fig. 6-11 Polished Casting of CaF_2 $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter \times 0.5 in. thick.

casting produced by this rapid cooling is highly strained, and care is required in handling to prevent the specimens from cracking. The results with aliovalent doping were universally poor and casting under more carefully controlled cooling conditions will be attempted during the next quarter.

Initially it was decided to use high purity starting material for the castings. Consequently, Optovac single crystal (random cuttings) CaF_2 was used, as well as Harshaw single crystal SrF_2 and BaF_2 . With successful results having been achieved for high purity starting material, it was decided to initiate in-house purification of lower grade material. As a result, "reagent" grade Fisher "Certified" CaF_2 was used. Several purification procedures were attempted. One (VHP-273) involved only the addition of five percent PbF_2 as a scavenger to the melt. The other involved the use of the two-zone furnace with teflon being used to provide a "fluorine" purifying atmosphere at elevated temperature according to the reaction:



Three castings (VHP-271, 272, 276) were made from two such purification runs with excellent results.

The teflon purification procedure is as follows. The CaF_2 powder is slowly heated under vacuum to 900°C until the vacuum is below $10 \mu\text{m}$. The powder to be purified is in an ATJ graphite crucible located in the lower zone of the furnace (Fig. 6-12). Teflon vapors are then introduced into the system at a partial pressure of $200 - 1000 \mu\text{m}$ by independently controlling the teflon filled graphite crucible located in the upper zone of the furnace. The purification is run nominally for 24 - 40 hours at which time the furnace power is turned off. Unfortunately, under these conditions the teflon is also reduced to carbon and the CaF_2 comes out black. Consequently, the powder is subsequently roasted in air for several hours at 500°C to oxidize the carbon leaving only purified CaF_2 . Further efforts are underway in order to eliminate the need for the last step.

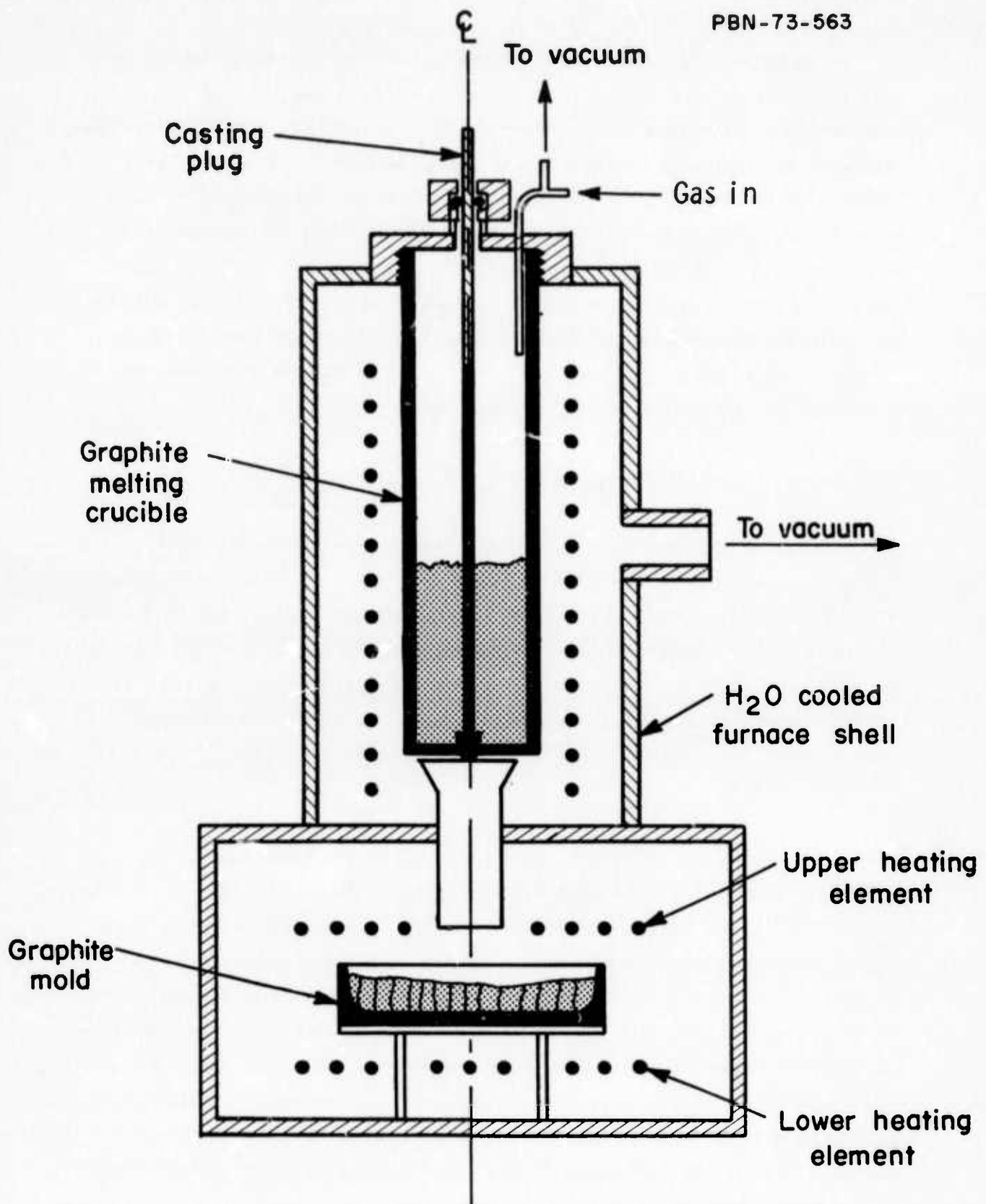


Fig. 6-12 Schematic Diagram of Eight-Inch Diameter Two Zone Vacuum Furnace.

Selected samples of raw materials were analyzed by emission spectroscopy. Table 6-6 gives the results of the analyses on the following samples: Harshaw single crystal SrF_2 , a casting of SrF_2 (VHP-144), Harshaw and Optovac single crystal CaF_2 , an early casting of CaF_2 (HN1-2) in the vacuum hot press, and two castings of CaF_2 (CF-8 and CF-18) produced in the two-zone furnace at the time the alumina reaction problems were occurring in that furnace. From these analyses, it is clear that casting in the vacuum hot press furnace does not degrade the purity of the single crystal starting material. However, in the two-zone furnace, an increase in impurities does occur. No analyses are yet available for the in-house purified material.

6.2.2 Hot forging

During the first six months only two hot forgings of single crystal CaF_2 were attempted as listed in Table 6-4. Both were quite successful. Figure 6-13 shows VHP-154, a hot forging done at 1000°C in the vacuum hot press. A one-inch-diameter Optovac single crystal was hot forged to 79 percent reduction in thickness. Resultant grain size, however, is large, as seen in Fig. 6-14, due to the high forging temperature.

6.2.3 Strain annealing

The major problems with the casting of the fluorides during the first six months were the high residual strains due to rapid cooling in the vacuum hot press furnace, and the resulting susceptibility to cracking. Early in the program, a strain anneal procedure was developed. Figure 6-15 shows qualitatively the results of strain reduction (as viewed through crossed polarizers) by vacuum annealing one CaF_2 casting in the two-zone furnace equipped with only a mechanical vacuum pump and achieving a vacuum of 1 - 10 μm . Figure 6-15a shows the as-cast sample (from which pieces have been cut). Figure 6-15b shows some strain reduction by a vacuum anneal at 500°C for 10 hours, followed by cooling to room temperature at $25^\circ\text{C}/\text{hour}$. Figure 6-15c shows the sample reannealed at 1000°C for ten hours, followed by cooling at $25^\circ\text{C}/\text{hour}$. In this case, the sample is quite free of residual strain. Figures 6-16a and 6-16b show another casting of CaF_2 both as-cast and annealed at 1000°C for seven hours and cooled at $25^\circ\text{C}/\text{hour}$.

TABLE 6-6

ANALYSIS OF PURE SrF_2 AND CaF_2
STARTING CRYSTALS AND CASTINGS

| <u>Detected*</u> <u>Impurities</u> | <u>Harshaw</u> <u>SrF_2</u> | <u>Cast</u> <u>SrF_2 (VHP144)</u> | <u>Harshaw</u> <u>CaF_2</u> | <u>Optovac</u> <u>CaF_2</u> | <u>Casting</u> <u>HN1-2</u> | <u>Casting</u> <u>CF8</u> | <u>Casting</u> <u>CF18</u> |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mg | 2 | 1 | 10 | 0.1 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 5 |
| Al | ND | ND | 1 | 0.5 | ND | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Si | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.1 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Ca | 500 | 700 | H | H | H | H | H |
| Cr | ND | ND | ND | ND | ND | 0.5 | ND |
| Mn | ND | ND | 0.1 | ND | ND | 0.1 | ND |
| Fe | 0.05 | ND | 0.5 | 0.5 | ND | 5 | 0.5 |
| Ni | ND | ND | ND | ND | ND | 5 | 1 |
| Cu | 0.01 | 0.05 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.5 | 50 | 1 |
| Sr | H | H | ND | ND | ND | ND | ND |
| Ag | 0.05 | 0.05 | ND | ND | ND | ND | ND |
| Ba | 1 | ND | ND | ND | ND | ND | ND |
| Pb | ND | ND | ND | ND | ND | 0.5 | ND |
| Total Impurities Detected** | 3.2 | 1.2 | 12.2 | 1.7 | 1.1 | 62.2 | 8.1 |

ND \equiv not detectedH \equiv balance

* 37 additional elements undetected, results in ppm

** Excluding Ca in the SrF_2 samples

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Fig. 6- 13 CaF_2 Single Crystal Hot Forging. Sample VHP-154.
Forged at 1000°C to 79 percent reduction.

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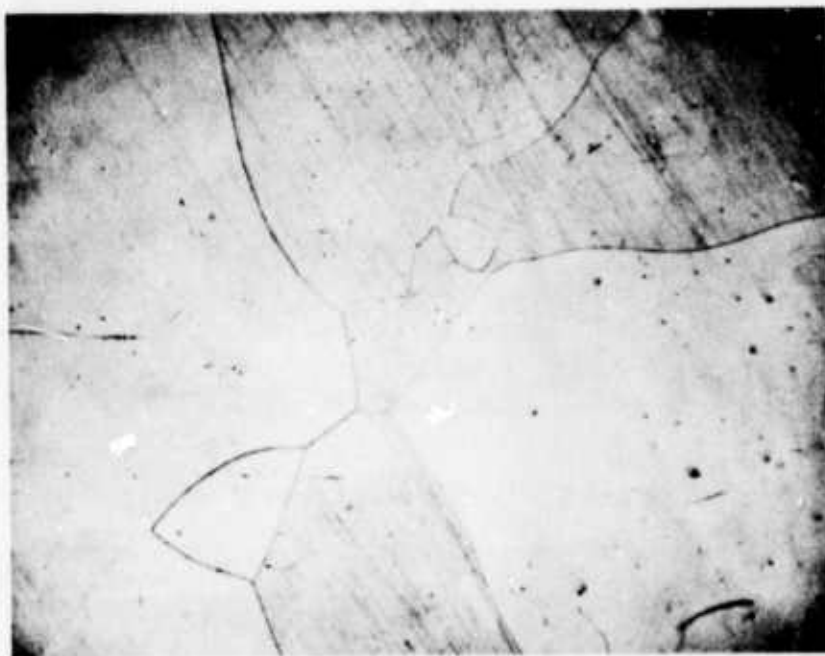


Fig. 6- 14 Photomicrograph of VHP-154. Hot Forged CaF_2 at 1000°C
79 percent reduction in thickness. 25X



Fig. 6-15a CaF_2 As Cast. Viewed through crossed polarizers.



Fig. 6-15b Same. 500°C anneal for 10 hrs. and cooled at 25°C/hr .

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Fig. 6-15 c Same. 1000°C anneal for 10 hrs. and cooled at 25°C/hr.

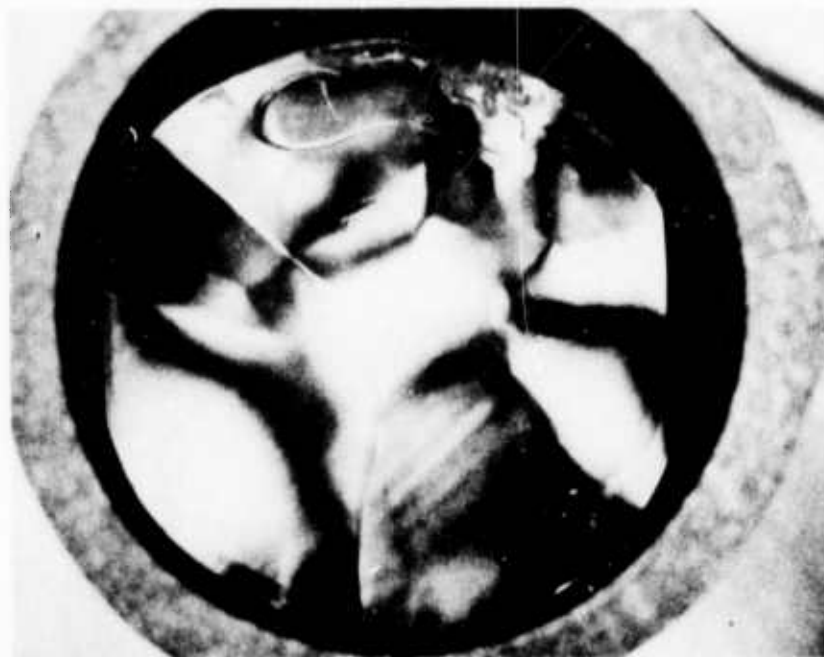


Fig. 6-16a Cast CaF_2 (VHP-167), As Cast. Viewed through crossed polarizers.



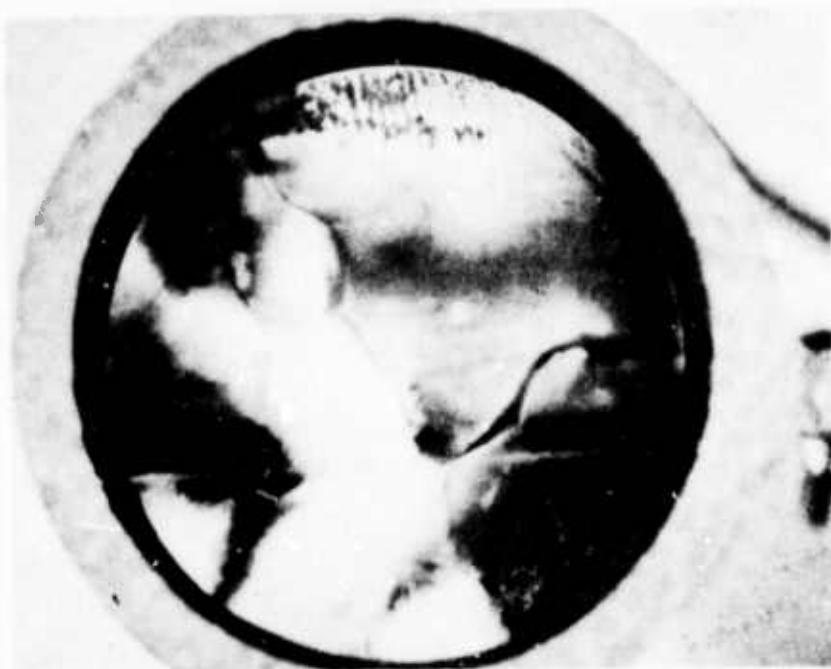
Fig. 6-16b Same After 1000°C Anneal for 10 hrs. and Cooled at 25°C/hr.

As a result of the success of these early strain anneals, several large castings were similarly annealed to give strain-free samples for polishing (Fig. 6-11) and testing. Only late in the first quarter, as is discussed below, was it discovered that this annealing procedure degraded the optical properties (i. e. , 5.25 μm absorption) by a precipitation and scatter problem. During the second quarter, the inter-relation between strain relief annealing and the development of scattering centers was investigated more fully and several alternative strain relief procedures were established without degrading the optical properties.

One procedure is illustrated in Fig. 6-17. Figure 6-17a shows the as-cast sample severely strained. Figure 6-17b shows the same sample annealed at 900°C for 24 hours and cooled at 25°C/hour. The other procedure involves annealing at 1000°C while providing a purifying atmosphere of teflon vapor at about 50 μm of partial pressure during the run. As will be discussed below, no degradation of optical properties occurs for either alternative strain relief procedure.

6.2.4 Optical properties and scattering

The feasibility of casting high purity CaF_2 has been demonstrated during the first six months of this program by using high purity starting material and by in-house purification of "reagent" grade powder. Figures 6-18, 6-19, and 6-20 show respectively the IR transmission spectra for an Optovac single crystal of CaF_2 , a polycrystalline CaF_2 casting (VHP-167) using Optovac single crystals as starting material, and a polycrystalline CaF_2 casting (VHP-271) using purified "reagent" grade powder, with no detectable differences in the three. No impurity bands are detectable in any of the three. The 5.25 μm absorption coefficients for these three samples are $4.9 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1}$, $4.8 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1}$, and $4.3 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1}$, respectively. These absorption coefficients were measured using a CO laser calorimeter in our laboratory, and no surface loss corrections have been made. Clearly, the results show the fusion casting process does not degrade the optical properties of the starting material. Furthermore, it



6-17a Cast CaF_2 (VHP-186), As Cast. Viewed through crossed polarizers.

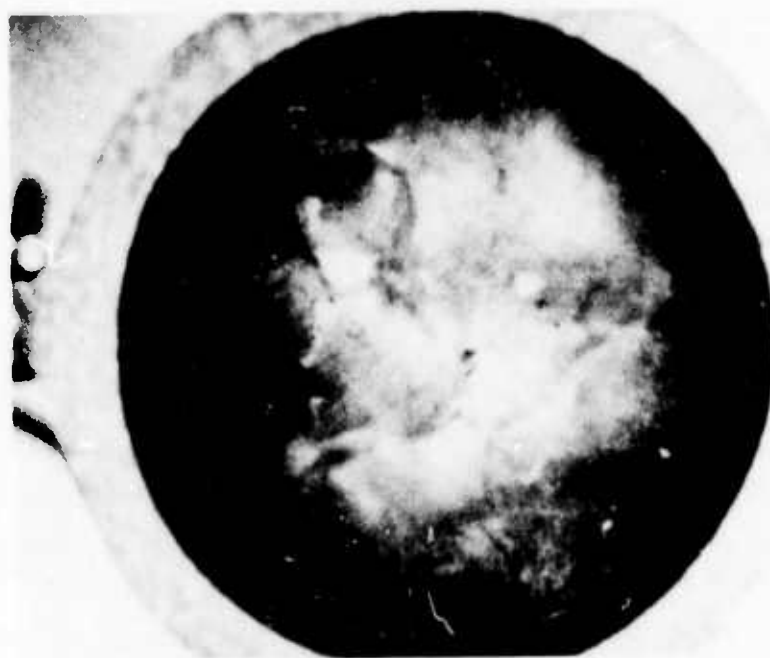


Fig. 6-17b Same After 900°C Anneal for 24 hrs. and Cooled at 25°C/hr.

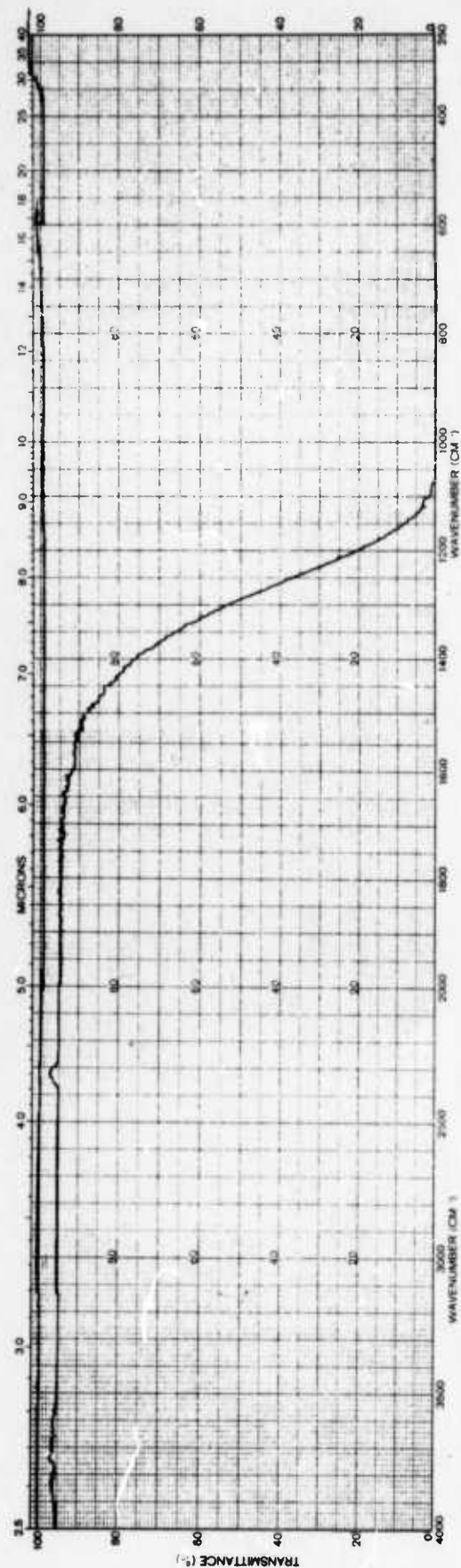


Fig. 6-18 Infrared Spectrum of Sample Optovac CaF_2 Single Crystal. 5.8 cm path length.

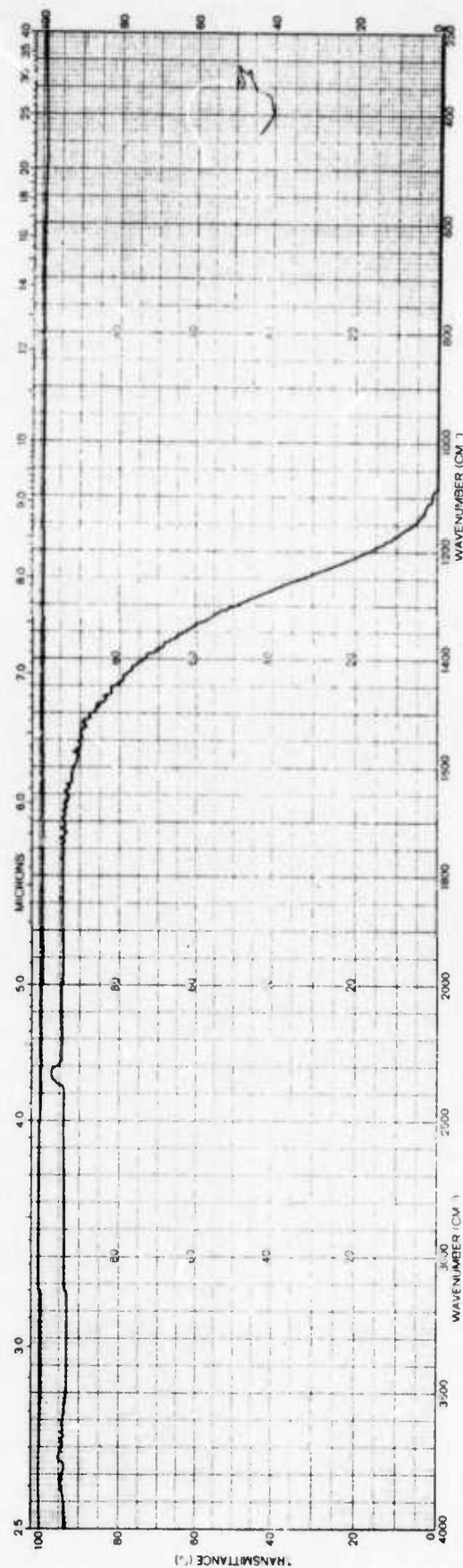


Fig. 6-19 Infrared Spectrum of Sample VHP 167, Cast CaF_2 . 6.5 cm path length.
Optovac single crystal starting material.

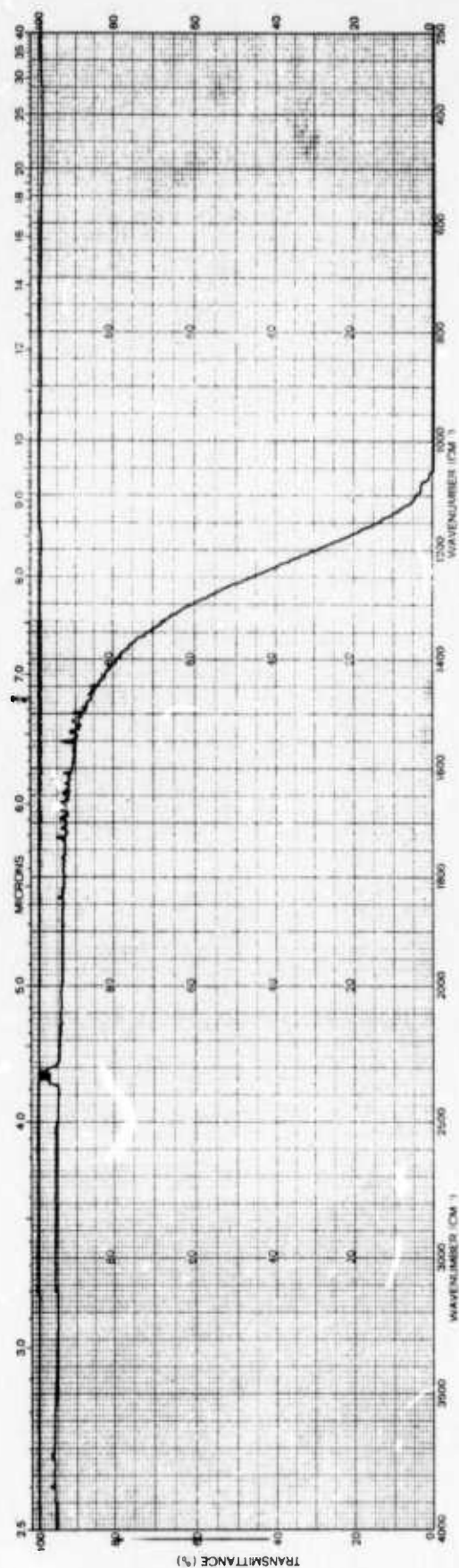


Fig. 6-20 Infrared Spectrum of Sample VHP-271, Cast CaF_2 . 4.4 cm path length.
Purified "reagent" grade powder.

proves that an all graphite system is capable of achieving high quality material, that polycrystalline material is as equal in optical quality as high purity single crystal material, and that purified "reagent" grade powder can be used as starting material.

That the teflon purification scheme best achieves high quality castings from "reagent" powder starting material and purifies the material is shown by a casting (VHP-273) of non-teflon treated powder with only PbF_2 added as a scavenger. Its measured $5.25 \mu\text{m}$ absorption coefficient is only $7.7 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1}$. Similarly, a very good vacuum as is usual in the vacuum hot press ($10^{-3} - 10^{-4}$ torr) may be necessary to achieve high quality. A casting (VHP-270) of single crystal starting material in a $50 - 100 \mu\text{m}$ vacuum (diffusion pump turned off in the vacuum hot press) resulted in a very high $5.25 \mu\text{m}$ absorption coefficient of $3.1 \times 10^{-2} \text{ cm}^{-1}$. Work is presently underway to determine further the effects of various inert atmospheres and degrees of vacuum on the optical properties of the castings.

Figures 6-21 and 6-22 show the IR transmission curves, respectively, for a sample of Harshaw single crystal SrF_2 and for a polycrystalline casting (VHP-275) of SrF_2 . Again no detectable differences can be noted nor are any impurity bands detectable in either sample. Moreover, the laser-measured $5.25 \mu\text{m}$ absorption coefficients are $5.3 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ and $1.2 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1}$, respectively, an indication that the fusion casting procedure of adding PbF_2 as a scavenger may improve substantially the optical quality of the single crystal SrF_2 starting material.

Early in the casting of CaF_2 , it was noticed that in random castings a bubble layer (or region) occurred about half way into the casting in a plane perpendicular to the freezing direction. It was even observed in several samples that some preferred orientation of these tiny bubbles occurred. In most cases, the bubble layer of these castings could be cut away leaving very good material in the bottom section. The reasons for the tiny bubbles is still unclear and will be investigated further.

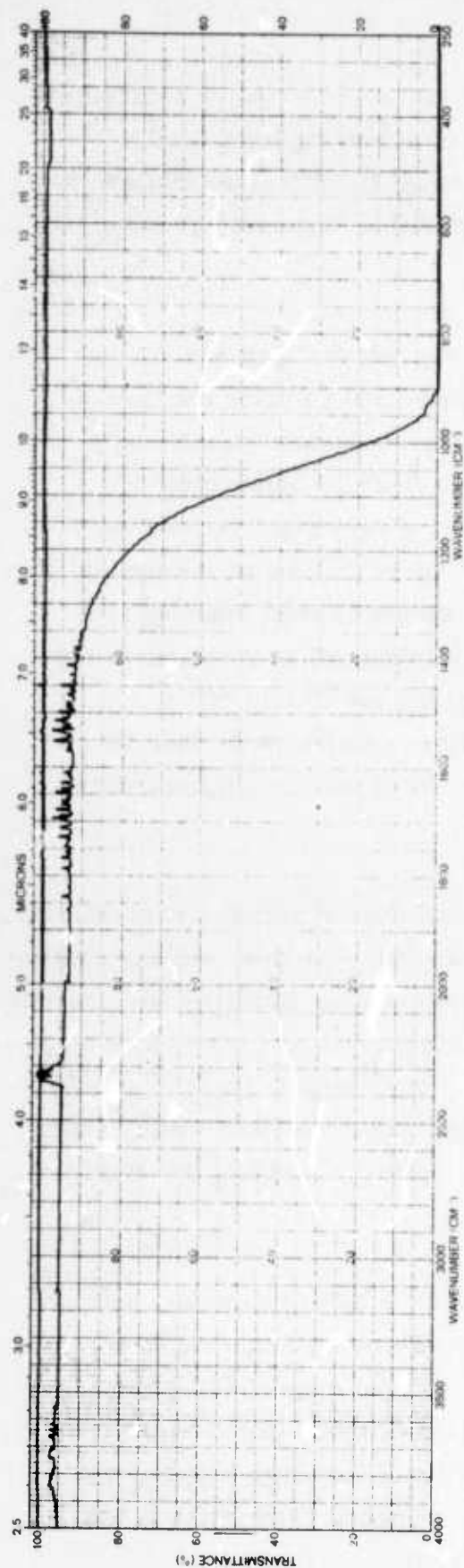


Fig. 6-21 Infrared Spectrum of Sample Harshaw Single Crystal SrF_2 . 5.0 cm path length.

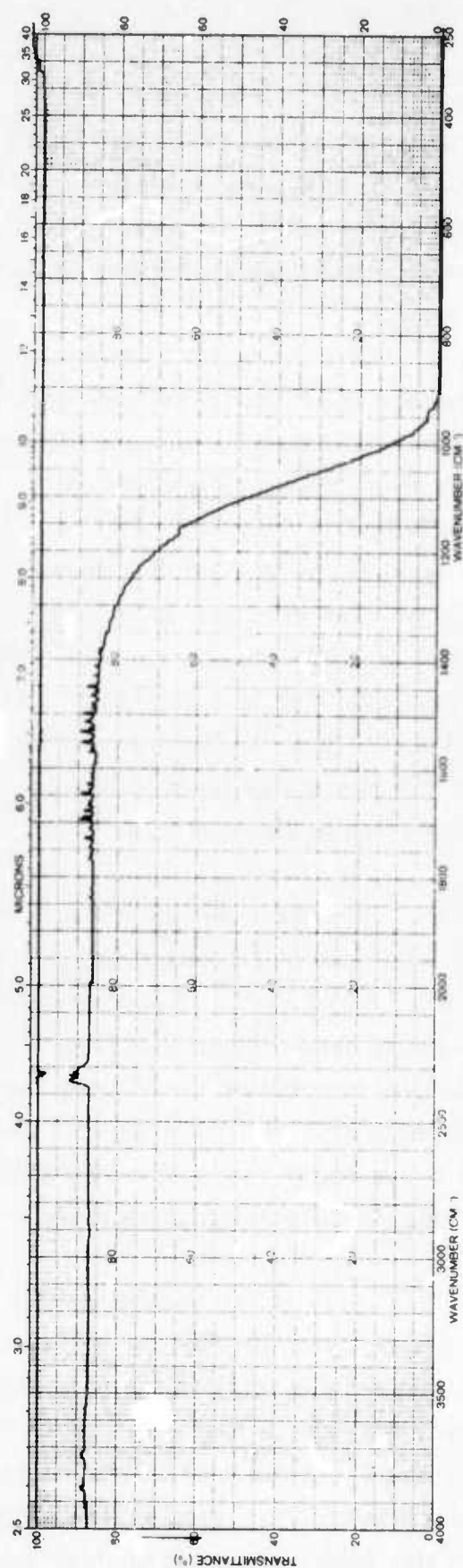


Fig. 6-22 Infrared Spectrum of Sample VHP-275, Cast SrF_2 . 6.0 cm path length.

The effect of these tiny bubbles on the optical properties of the castings are shown in Table 6-7. These results indicate qualitatively the effect of scatter centers on 5.25 μm absorption. Three measurements were made on a casting in which there was a region of bubbles. In the region with no bubbles and least scatter, a good 5.25 μm absorption coefficient of $5.7 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ was measured. Nearer the bubbly region, a slightly higher absorption occurred, while directly through the bubbly region (high scatter), a high apparent absorption coefficient of $2.3 \times 10^{-3} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ was measured.

The scatter results can also be graphically seen in Fig. 6-23. This figure shows two CaF_2 castings, one with (VHP-194) and one without (VHP-167) scattering as viewed with a He-Ne laser beam. The specimen with scattering has a measured 5.25 μm absorption coefficient of $2.0 \times 10^{-3} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ (average of 3 samples from one large casting), while the scatter free sample has the above mentioned β of $4.8 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1}$.

Scattering is clearly a serious problem and its possible development during strain annealing required further investigation. The effect of annealing at 1000°C is shown in Fig. 6-24 and Table 6-8. Figure 6-24 shows the formerly scatter-free casting (Fig. 6-23) after an anneal at 1000°C for seven hours followed by cooling at 25°C/hour. Again a He-Ne laser beam is directed through the interior of the sample. Figure 6-24a shows the high degree of scatter now in the sample produced during the anneal. The two figures together show the nature of preferred orientation of the scattering centers. Figure 6-24b shows the same sample but with the specimen rotated by about 20°. Much less scatter is apparent.

The scatter also degraded the optical properties of the annealed (1000°C) castings (Table 6-8). For this sample (VHP-167), as annealed and with scatter, the 5.25 μm absorption coefficient is $8.0 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1}$, an increase of about 70 percent over its scatter-free (and unannealed) absorption coefficient. Similarly, another sample (HN1 of Table 6-7) was annealed and the resultant absorption degradation noted, an increase of about 90 percent to $1.1 \times 10^{-3} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ from $5.7 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1}$. Specimens VHP-194, 196, and 203 also similarly annealed show high absorption coefficients (Table 6-8).

TABLE 6-7

APPARENT ABSORPTION COEFFICIENTS AND SCATTERING

CaF₂ CASTING HN1

| <u>5.25 μm Absorption Coefficient</u> | <u>Location in Sample</u> |
|--|---------------------------|
| $5.7 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ | through clear area |
| $6.6 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ | near bubbles |
| $2.3 \times 10^{-3} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ | through bubbles |

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CaF₂ Casting with Scattering



CaF₂ Casting without Scattering

Fig. 6- 23 Left. Sample of cast CaF₂ (VHP-194) showing scatter.
Right. Sample of cast CaF₂ (VHP-167) showing no scatter.

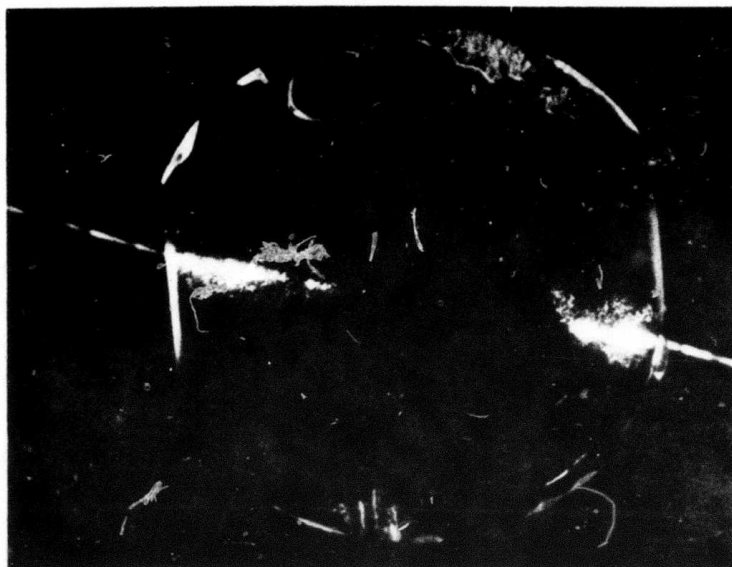


Fig. 6-24a Scattering in Cast CaF_2 (VHP-167) After Annealing.



Fig. 6-24b Same Only Rotated About 20° .

TABLE 6-8

5.3 μm ABSORPTION AND HEAT TREATMENT

| <u>CaF₂ CASTINGS</u> | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| <u>Specimen</u> | <u>Heat Treatment</u> | <u>β 5.3 μm</u> |
| VHP-194 | 1000°C | $20.2 \pm .4 \times 10^{-4} \text{cm}^{-1}(3)$ |
| VHP-196 | 1000°C | $36.6 \pm 2.0 \times 10^{-4}(3)$ |
| VHP-203 | 1000°C | $9.4 \pm 1.8 \times 10^{-4}(5)$ |
| VHP-167 | As Cast | 4.8×10^{-4} |
| -CF-17 | 1000°C | $8.0 \pm .1 \times 10^{-4}(2)$ |
| -CF-17-52 | 1000°C; 1000°C + teflon | 6.1×10^{-4} |
| VHP-268 | As Cast | 4.8×10^{-4} |
| VHP-264 | As Cast | 4.8×10^{-4} |
| -CF66 | 900°C | 4.9×10^{-4} |
| VHP-271-P1 | As Cast | 4.3×10^{-4} |
| VHP-272-P2 | As Cast | 4.2×10^{-4} |

() = number of measurements.

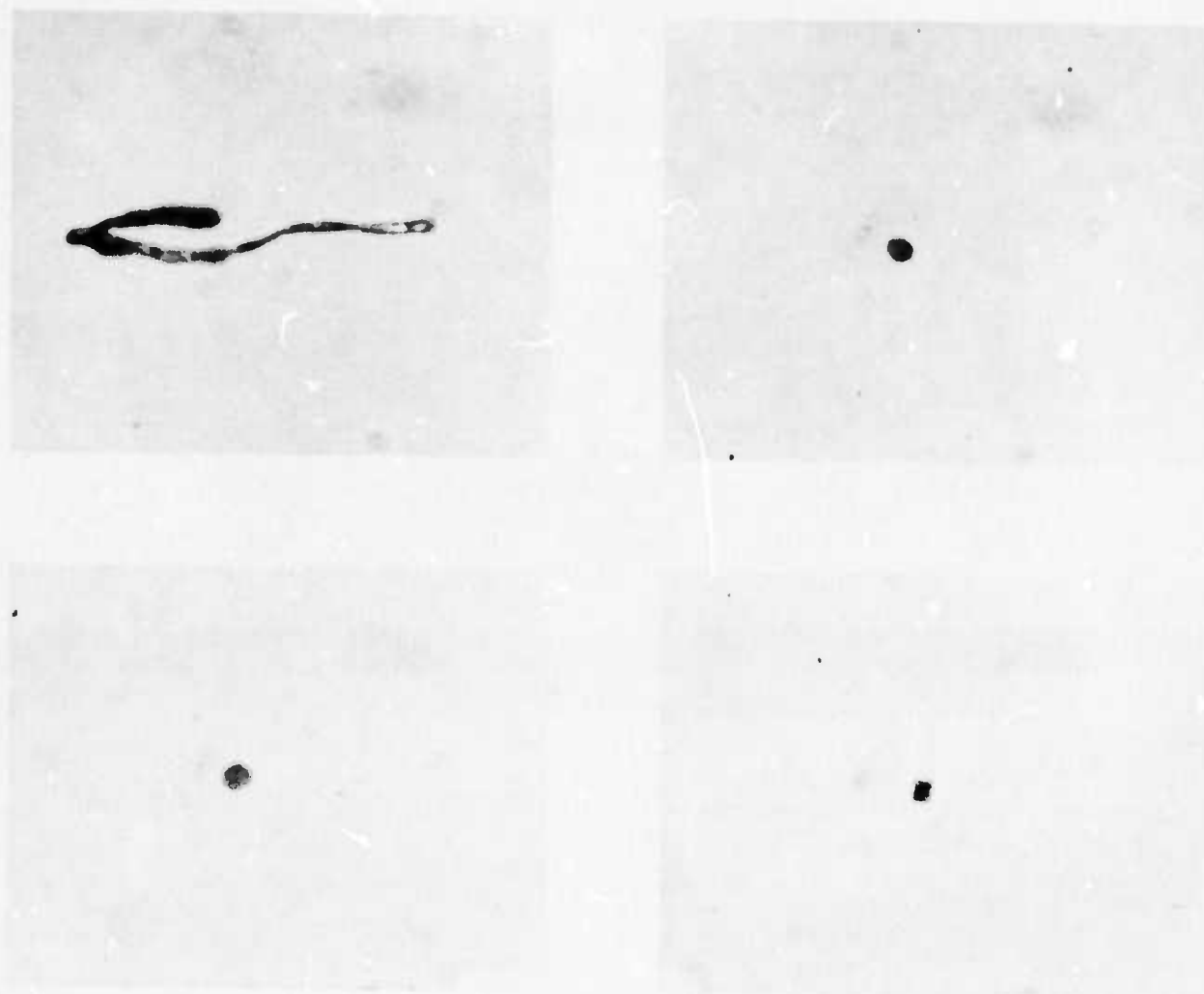
Figure 6-25 shows graphically some of scattering centers produced in VHP-167 after annealing at 1000°C. The micrograph was taken in transmitted light and focussed in the interior of the sample; it shows the preferred orientation of these scattering centers which are about 100 μm long. It has not yet been established what the scattering centers are, but there is some evidence that they are platelets (viewed on edge in Fig. 6-25). Figure 6-26 shows types of scattering centers present in another annealed sample (VHP-194). These were found in a more random nature, and show an elongated bubble as well as faceted inclusions. Figure 6-27a clearly shows two of these faceted inclusions just beneath a {111} cleavage plane of CaF_2 . The three-fold symmetry strongly suggests that these may be "negative" crystals. Figure 6-27b shows the inclusion (lower arrow) of Fig. 6-27a at higher magnification. Figure 6-27c shows the other inclusion (upper arrow) of Fig. 6-27a that was farther below the surface. It has now been brought to the surface (the lower inclusion now having been removed) by careful polishing. This micrograph now shows the inclusion as the inverted triangular shape of its pre-polished state and indicates that it is the opposite face of a perfect octahedron, and that it also was almost completely polished away. Figure 6-27d shows the same inclusion at 5000 \times (SEM) and clearly proves that it is a void and not a particle and that it was faceted. Furthermore, ion probe analysis showed no impurities either in or near the inclusion.

The problem of increase of scatter centers and optical degradation during stress relief can be overcome by proper stress relief annealing as shown in Tables 6-8 and 6-9. Table 6-9 lists a series of Optovac single crystals variously annealed for ten hours and slow cooled at 25°C/hour (except for VHP-225). Note that by annealing below 1000°C (CF-58 and CF-60), no increase in absorption coefficient (or scatter) occurs. At 1000°C an increase does occur (CF-33 and CF-59) as it does in similarly annealed castings as discussed previously. However, the increase at 1000°C can be overcome by either annealing in a better vacuum (10^{-4} torr compared to about 10 μm normally) or by annealing in a teflon vapor atmosphere (partial pressure of about 50 μm) as shown by VHP-225 and CF-52-2, respectively. Specimen CF-52-1 seems to indicate that the damage may

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Fig. 6- 25 Scattering Centers in Cast CaF_2 (VHP-167) After Annealing.
Transmitted light. 100X



Bubbles in CaF_2 Casting

50 μ

Fig. 6- 26 Scattering Centers in Cast CaF_2 .

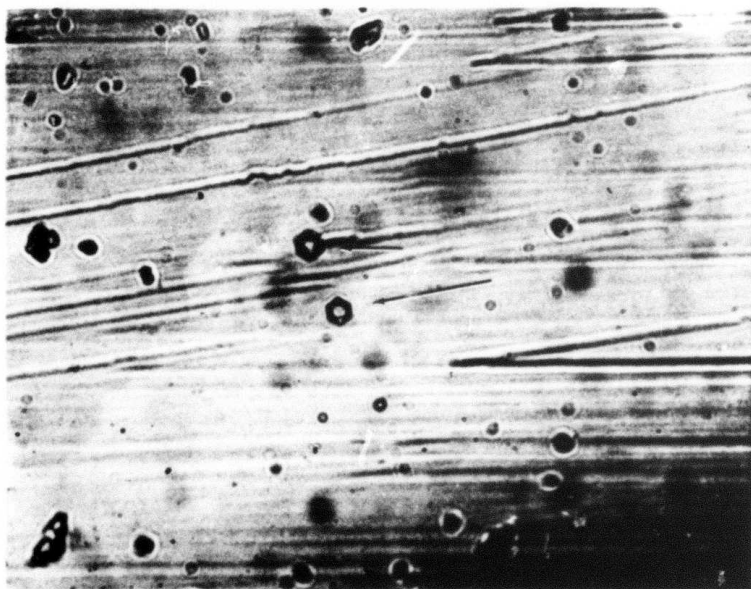
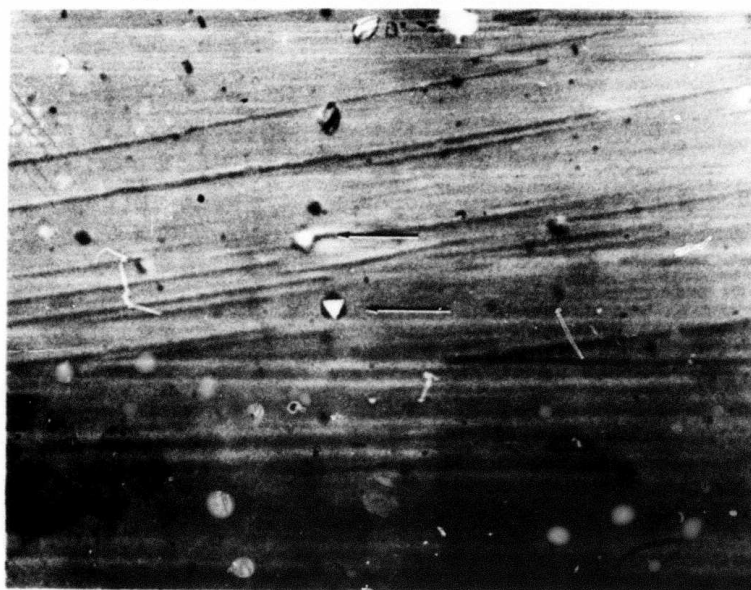


Fig. 6-27a Scattering Centers (arrows) Just Below Cleavage Surface in Cast CaF_2 . Top: incident illumination. Bottom: transmitted illumination.

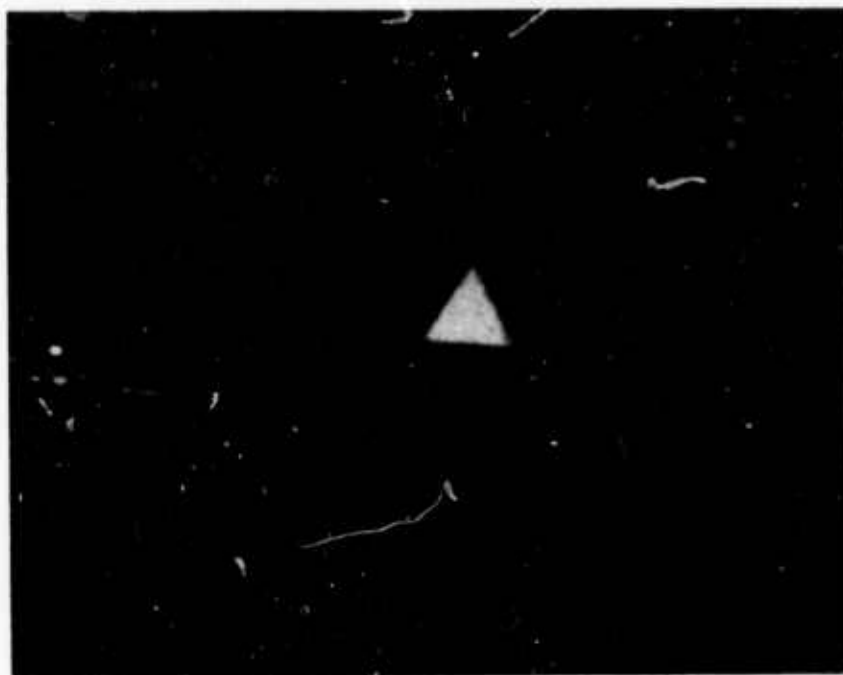


Fig. 6-27b Scattering Center just Below Cleavage Surface in Cast CaF_2 . 1000 \times .



Fig. 6-27c Scattering Center after Polishing Sample to Bring it to the Surface in Cast CaF_2 . 1000 \times .

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Fig. 6-27d Scattering Center at Surface in Cast CaF_2 . SEM 5000 \times .

TABLE 6-9

5.3 μm ABSORPTION AND HEAT TREATMENT
SINGLE CRYSTAL CaF_2

| <u>Specimen</u> | <u>Heat Treatment</u> | <u>$\beta_{5.3 \mu\text{m}}$</u> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Optovac Single Crystal | As Received | $5.0 \pm .1 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^{-1} (2)$ |
| CF-58 | 800°C | 5.0×10^{-4} |
| CF-60 | 900°C | 4.7×10^{-4} |
| CF-59 | 1000°C | 9.6×10^{-4} |
| CF-33 | 1000°C | $6.6 \pm .5 \times 10^{-4} (5)$ |
| CF-52-1 | 1000°C; 1000°C ⁺ teflon | $6.2 \pm .2 \times 10^{-4} (2)$ |
| CF-52-2 | 1000°C ⁺ teflon | 5.0×10^{-4} |
| VHP-225 | 1000°C | 4.5×10^{-4} |
| | 10^{-4} torr vacuum | |

 () = no. of measurements

be reversible, i. e. , a sample annealed with the degrading 1000°C procedure and subsequently reannealed at 1000°C with teflon vapors present shows some improvement in optical quality. Similarly, a post anneal at 1000°C with teflon vapors present improved the previously degraded casting VHP-167 (Table 6-8). Note from Table 6-8 that castings (VHP-264-CF-66) as well as single crystals may be annealed at 900°C with no increase in absorption coefficient or scatter centers.

Since both high purity single crystals and castings behave similarly in the annealing runs, there is evidence that the problem at 1000°C is one of impurity pickup and/ or precipitation of excess vacancies during the annealing process. However, the problem can be overcome by annealing at a lower temperature or by annealing in a purifying atmosphere or in a better vacuum.

These results are important because it has been shown that the high quality castings produced in the vacuum hot press, although severely strained, can be annealed for strain relief with no resultant degradation of the optical properties.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Alkali Halides

7.1.1 TTT data

Time-temperature-transformation curves for precipitation and attendant hardness reduction in KCl-SrCl_2 alloys have been completed. The results indicate that for less than about 800 ppm SrCl_2 in solid solution, it should be possible to cool alloys to room temperature without precipitation.

7.1.2 Thermal conductivity

Thermal conductivity data obtained on KCl-SrCl_2 alloys at 93.5°C indicate very little effect of SrCl_2 doping on conductivity.

7.1.3 Strain removal

Residual strain in KCl castings has been successfully removed by an appropriate annealing and cooling cycle.

7.1.4 Optical properties

7.1.4.1 RAP processing

Reactive atmosphere processing (RAP) of "reagent" grade starting material was successful in removing impurity bands in the infrared. However, the broad absorption band centered near $10\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ was not completely removed.

7.1.4.2 $10.6\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ absorption and scattering

Many samples which do not exhibit the broad $10\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ absorption band still can have a high $10.6\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ absorption coefficient. Preliminary data indicated that this high apparent absorption coefficient can be correlated with scattering centers in the bulk.

7.2 Alkaline Earth Fluorides

7.2.1 Casting

As expected, the fluorides are easier to cast than the halides. Castings up to six inches in diameter have been successfully fabricated. Chemical analysis indicates that the purity of the castings is equivalent to that of the starting materials. Reactive atmosphere processing (RAP) of "reagent" grade powder has been successfully achieved using teflon vapor.

7.2.2 Hot forging

Preliminary hot forgings of single crystal CaF_2 have been made at 1000°C . At this temperature a very large grain size results.

7.2.3 Optical properties

$5.3\ \mu\text{m}$ calorimetric absorption coefficients of cast CaF_2 have been obtained in the mid $10^{-4}\ \text{cm}^{-1}$ range using both high purity single crystal and RAP treated "reagent" grade powder as starting material. Qualitative correlation between scattering center density and apparent absorption coefficient has been obtained in the fluorides similar to the results with the halides. $5.3\ \mu\text{m}$ calorimetric absorption coefficients of cast SrF_2 have been obtained as low as $1.2 \times 10^{-4}\ \text{cm}^{-1}$.

7.2.4 Stress relief

Annealing at 1000°C and slow cooling successfully removes residual stress in cast CaF_2 ingots. However, the annealing is accompanied by a large increase in the apparent $5.3\ \mu\text{m}$ absorption coefficient and a significant increase in scatter center density. These two effects can be overcome by annealing at 1000°C in a better vacuum or in an atmosphere containing a partial pressure of teflon vapor, followed by slow cooling.

8.0 PLANS FOR NEXT QUARTER

During the third quarter the areas of concentrated effort will be the following:

1. Continue efforts in the purification of the fluorides so that high purity starting materials are not required.
2. Place major emphasis on the casting of high quality SrF_2 .
3. Evaluate the mechanical properties of the fluoride castings.
4. Continue the aliovalent doping of the fluorides for potential strengthening purposes.
5. Continue the evaluation of different annealing procedures to optimize the technique.

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